

LC

1011

A25C5









NOT "A COLLEGE FETISH."

---

D. H. CHAMBERLAIN.



NOT "A COLLEGE FETISH."

---

AN ADDRESS

IN REPLY TO THE

Address of Charles Francis Adams, Jr.,

DELIVERED BEFORE

THE HARVARD CHAPTER OF THE FRATERNITY  
OF THE PHI BETA KAPPA,

AT CAMBRIDGE, JUNE 28, 1883,

BY

D. H. CHAMBERLAIN.

WITH PORTIONS OF ARTICLES

BY

PROFESSORS ZELLER, FISHER, AND PEABODY.

---

BOSTON:  
WILLARD SMALL,  
1884.

LC1011  
.A25C5

W. F. BROWN & Co., PRINTERS,  
218 Franklin St., Boston.

1356B28  
D30 42



NEW 217 92

## P R E F A C E .

---

The publication of the following address,—first delivered in the lecture course of the Yale Kent Club at New Haven, March 11, 1884, and repeated subsequently before the Amherst Chapter of the Phi Beta Kappa at Amherst College, May 2, 1884; at Phillips Academy, Andover, May 23, 1884; at Williston Seminary, Easthampton, May 10, 1884, and before the Phi Beta Kappa of the University of Vermont, at Burlington, June 24, 1884,—has been delayed by my engagement, before its full completion, to deliver it before the American Institute of Instruction at its annual session at Martha's Vineyard, the 9th inst. In now publishing it I have appended to it portions of three articles which have seemed to me to best present certain valuable views of the Greek question, out of all that has come to my notice since the delivery of Mr. Adams's address. The article by Prof. Zeller appeared in the *Deutsche Rundschau* for March, 1884; that by Prof. Peabody in the *Atlantic Monthly* for January, 1884, and that by Prof. Fisher in the *Princeton Review* for March, 1884.

I hope I shall not be suspected of offering my present contribution to this discussion as that of the "one man in ten thousand" whose voice Mr. Adams has not yet heard. On the contrary, I offer it simply as what my own studies have taught me—studies, I may add, never wholly pretermitted under any stress of adverse circumstances during more than twenty years of rather active life,—what I have seen with my own eyes and observed with my own senses, and nothing more. I do not present it as my individual "experience," like Mr. Adams. I confess I do not know so well as others, what the results of these studies have been on my own character and life. Nor do I value, as Mr. Adams seems to do, any man's own estimate or testimony as to himself upon this subject. I think that almost the only thing of value one can contribute to this discussion is those views and conclusions which one's study of the subject and observation of others may have impressed upon one.

For one thing, I have tried not to be dogmatic, but to give reasons for all my views, reasons which at least may be tested by other men's reason. It is a subject, however, on which I think the right

of one holding my views to be dogmatic, as the word is generally used, may be easily defended. For, in truth, to assert the value and superior utility of Greek studies is to repeat the voice of the wisest men of the last three centuries at least, including the present age. I fully agree with Mr. Higginson when in his charming essay, he says "there is no more possibility of arbitrary choice in languages than in stones; the best is the best."\*

Mr. Adams is at liberty to declare that he prefers the pearl to the diamond, or silver to gold, but the fact remains that the diamond and gold are the most precious of all gems or metals, and few feel called upon to prove their superiority.

The all-sufficing answer to the suggestions of Mr. Adams and President Eliot, in his recent *Century* article, of putting English or French or German on an equality with Greek and Latin, is that it is an attempt to treat things as equal which are not equal. Greek preceded English and French and German and is closely and inextricably intertwined with them, and leaving out of view its claims to superiority in all other respects, the fact of its priority in time remains, and if it is necessary to go back to the sources of anything in order to understand it, it is necessary to study and know Greek and Latin in order to know English or French or German. The question, then, really is not between Greek and English or French or German, but between English or French or German thoroughly studied and known and the same languages partly studied and partly known.

"Parallel courses," "modern equivalents," "early differentiation of studies," "options looking to future pursuits," "studies admissible with equal weight or rank," or whatever other catch-phrases may be used,—devices all which omit Greek,—are founded on a delusion as real and as unreasonable as would be a modern course in law which should omit Blackstone and Kent because contract and corporation law have enormously increased in importance in these days, and perchance the student's future practice may be mainly or exclusively in those branches. Surely we are fallen on evil days, when a man can say of Greek, with the applause of any part of an intelligent audience,—“It bears no immediate relation to any living speech or literature of value.”

D. H. C.

New York, July 10, 1884.

\*A plea for Culture, *Atlantic Essays*, p. 10.

## ADDRESS.

---

My present task is wholly self-suggested and self-imposed. It is simply an attempt to meet and controvert the arguments and opinions of the address of Mr. Charles Francis Adams, Jr., delivered in June last, before the Harvard Chapter of the Fraternity of the Phi Beta Kappa. I cannot say that I am called or moved by any sense of personal fitness or duty. The lines of my life lie, as they have lain, quite aside from the walks and ways of scholars. I can only say that the studies, reflections and experiences of my life have greatly interested me in this subject, and that I have some hope that what I may say will tend a little to more correct views and more intelligent opinions upon the matters which I shall try to discuss.

The address of Mr. Adams has naturally and deservedly attracted much attention. His public services and character, his position as one of the representatives of an illustrious family, the vigor and courage of his address, the confidence of his tone, the personal and family illustrations which enliven his arguments, have united to give freshness and force to this latest discussion of an old and well-worn theme.

I assume and believe that Mr. Adams was very much in earnest in this expression of his opinions and experiences. I shall certainly treat his discourse as a serious

discussion and honest statement of conclusions. Whatever criticisms may be made upon it, we ought, I think, to welcome it as a specimen of outspoken, vigorous opinions upon a theme of the very highest importance. If, as Mr. Adams thinks, nearly the whole cultivated world is still indulging in a most important feature of its higher education, in "fetish-worship"; in an absurd and unreasoning attachment to studies which are not suited to present wants, nor conducive to present success — which are not only a waste of time, but by their compulsory requirement are excluding better studies, it is the right and duty of any earnest man to challenge the claims of such studies; and the more securely they have become entrenched by custom and prescription, the greater is the duty of those who see or think they see their real hollowness and comparative worthlessness, to expose and denounce the pretensions and false claims by which they have been supported. It is not sacrilege, surely, to destroy a "fetish"! None of us, I presume, wish to continue to worship a "fetish." If, unhappily, we have been worshipping one, I am quite sure we should all welcome, as we ought to do, the voice that should expose, and the hand that should destroy even *our* "fetish." But old delusions retire slowly; "fetishes" even, long worshipped, will struggle for a little longer recognition, and so, inevitably and finally, Mr. Adams must expect that men will still ask, what *is* a "fetish"? and is that which in his address, at Cambridge, he describes and denounces as a "fetish," a *real* "fetish," after all? That is the serious question — a question which I think is always one of deep interest, worthy of the best consideration, the most unfettered discussion which any man can bring. If the study of Greek can be shown to be "fetish-worship," if it can be shown to

be less than the best use that can be made of the time of our youth, for their highest and best success — success in all its senses and forms — then let it cease, and let better implements of mental training take its place.

In the task which I set before me — the only task I attempt — of replying to Mr. Adams — it is necessary to observe his exact positions, so far as they are disclosed by this address. Much misapprehension exists on this point which ought to be at once corrected, and for which Mr. Adams is not responsible.

Let me quote Mr. Adams's words, which state his main demand and conclusion :

“The modernist asks,” he says, “of the college, to change its requirements for admission only in this wise : Let it say to the student who presents himself, ‘In what languages, besides Latin and English, those are required of all — in what other languages — Hebrew, Greek, German, French, Spanish or Italian, will you be examined?’ If the student replies, ‘In Greek,’ so be it ; let him be examined in that alone ; and if, as now, he can stumble through a few lines of Xenophon or Homer, and render some simple English sentences into questionable Greek, let that suffice ; as respects languages, let him be pronounced fitted for a college course. If, however, instead of offering himself in the classic, he offers himself in the modern tongues, then, though no mercy be shown him, let him at least no longer be turned contemptuously away from the college doors ; but instead of the poor quarter-knowledge, ancient and modern, now required, let him be permitted to pass such an examination as will show that he has so mastered two languages besides his own, that he can go forward in his studies, using them as working tools.”

This is a fair-sounding proposition: — Do not make Greek compulsory — leave it optional. But it involves just this question and consideration — whether Greek is or is not the best implement for doing the proper work of the college? The fact that some or many wished to take German or other modern language, in place of Greek, would not be even an argument in favor of allowing them to do it, unless it was first determined that German or some other modern language, could equally well do the work for which the college exists.

Let no one here charge me with illiberality, for it is Mr. Adams who, in this address, tells us, “In regard to the theory of what we call a liberal education, there is, as I understand it, not much room for difference of opinion. There are certain fundamental requirements, without a thorough mastery of which no man can pursue a specialty to advantage. Upon these common fundamentals are grafted the specialties.”

Again he says, “I think all will admit that, as respects the fundamentals, the college training should be compulsory and severe. It should extend through the whole course. No one ought to become a Bachelor of Arts until upon the fundamentals, he has passed an examination, the scope and thoroughness of which should set at defiance what is perfectly well defined as the science of cramming.”

Mr. Adams and the advocates of Greek are, then, in complete agreement on these initial positions;—*first*, that there must be a fixed and compulsory course of study, embracing certain studies which he has well enough called “fundamentals”; *second*, that as to these “fundamentals,” the training should not only be compulsory and severe, but that it should extend through the whole course; and *third*, that upon these “fundamentals” no one should be



admitted to the degree of Bachelor of Art, who has not passed a rigid and thorough examination.

These positions seem to leave only the question — what ought these “fundamentals” to be? If we can determine that question our controversy ends; for no man can dispute with me about the need of the utmost attainable thoroughness in all college studies, or the correctness of what Mr. Adams calls “the greatest of all practical precepts—that every man should in life master some one thing, be it great or be it small”; that “superficiality is dangerous as well as contemptible”; that “what is worth doing at all is worth doing well”; or, “finally,” to quote still from Mr. Adams, “that the power to follow out a line of sustained, close thought, expressing ourselves in clear, concise terms,” is the result of “a mastery of well-selected fundamentals”; or, that a familiar knowledge of the modern languages is needful for the best success in many of the pursuits and studies of modern life, and that these languages embody the best results of modern thought, modern science, and modern attainments of all kinds.

I observe, with sincere pleasure, that Mr. Adams is not a champion of the so-called scientific training in distinction from the classical or literary. Upon this point it is pleasant to quote from Mr. Adams: “I desire to say,” he remarks, “that I am no believer in that narrow, scientific and technological training which now and again we hear extolled. A practical, and too often a mere vulgar, money-making utility seems to be its natural outcome.”

I see no trace, likewise, in this address, of approval of an extensive system of optional or elective studies in a college course. Judging him by the whole tenor of his discourse — by what he most insists upon — Mr. Adams

may be called orthodox and conservative on all these questions.

Let us first see, then, what are Mr. Adams's reasons for *not* putting Greek among the "fundamentals."

In his judgment, Greek is in general too remote from modern life and thought; "The human mind, outside of cloisters," he says, "is occupied with other and more pressing things," especially with "scientific thoughts"; students are now brought up in a "new atmosphere," and are "not in sympathy with the remote past," and as the modern languages are the avenues to modern thought, they should be the college studies in preparation for modern life. Of Greek he says: "Not only is it a dead tongue, but it bears no immediate relation, to any living speech or literature of value."

It is true that Mr. Adams in several instances concedes and asserts the value of Greek and Latin, declaring, for example, that no one can admire more than he, "the subtile, indescribable fineness of thought and diction which a thorough classical education gives to the scholar." Elsewhere he says, "Of Greek really studied and lovingly learned, there cannot well be two opinions"; it is "the basis of the finest scholarship"; yet he finally says, "There is, in what are called the educated classes, both in this country and in Europe, a very considerable amount of affectation and credulity in regard to Greek and Latin masterpieces. That is jealously prized as part of the body of the classics, which if published to-day in German or French or English, would not excite a passing notice. There are immortal poets, whose immortality, my mature judgment tells me, is wholly due to the fact that they lived two thousand years ago." He declares as the result of all his experience and observation that "whether viewed as a



thing of use, as an accomplishment, as a source of pleasure, or as a mental training, I would rather myself be familiar with the German tongue and its literature than be equally familiar with the Greek. I would unhesitatingly make the same choice for my child. What I have said of German as compared with Greek, I will also say of French as compared with Latin. On this last point I have no question. Authority and superstition apart, I am indeed unable to see how an intelligent man, having any considerable acquaintance with the two literatures, can, as respects either richness or beauty, compare the Latin with the French; while as a worldly accomplishment, were it not for fetish-worship, in these days of universal travel the man would properly be regarded as out of his mind, who preferred to be able to read the odes of Horace rather than to feel at home in the accepted neutral language of all refined society."

Mr. Adams takes some positions from which indeed it is difficult to dislodge him. When he declares that in the Harvard of his day he was "compelled to devote the best part of his school life to acquiring a confessedly superficial knowledge of two dead languages"; that "not only was the knowledge of our theoretical fundamentals to the last degree superficial, but nothing better was expected"; that "the fundamentals were no longer studied as a means, but as an end—the end being to get into college"; that "thoroughness of training in any real-life sense of the term was unknown in those branches with which I came in contact"; he speaks of matters of which his knowledge ought certainly to be better than mine. I do not intend to be disrespectful to Mr. Adams when I say, however, that I do not believe that this is a fair or just account of the instruction in Harvard thirty years

ago or at any other time; and that I do not believe any considerable number of Harvard graduates will sustain Mr. Adams's assertions.

But the question here is not whether Greek is taught or has been taught at Harvard in the manner which Mr. Adams represents, but whether if taught, as all will concede it should be taught — in the best practicable manner — it is still a “college fetish.”

Mr. Adams does not state explicitly the objects which he conceives are to be specially sought by the compulsory study of the “fundamentals,” — though he does say, “The whole experience and observation of my life lead me to look with greater admiration, and an envy ever increasing, on the broadened culture which is the true end and aim of the University.” “On this point,” he says, “I cannot be too explicit, for I should be sorry indeed if anything I might utter were construed into an argument against the most liberal education. There is a considerable period in every man's life,” he continues, “when the best thing he can do is to let his mind soak and tan in the vats of literature. The atmosphere of a university is breathed into a student's system — it enters by the very pores.” . . . “I would not narrow the basis of liberal education; I would broaden it.”

I understand myself, therefore, to be standing with Mr. Adams on this proposition — that a broad culture, the broadest culture, a liberal education, the most liberal education — a culture and education which shall pervade the mind and spirit as the breath pervades the body — is the true end and aim of the College — that is, of the disciplinary training which precedes entrance on the active, responsible work of life. Certainly, I regard this proposition, entirely drawn in spirit, and almost in terms, from

Mr. Adams's address, as a correct and somewhat adequate general statement of the end to be sought by a compulsory requirement of the "fundamentals," whatever they are. It may, then, be laid down again for the purposes of this discussion, with the concurrence of Mr. Adams, as it has often been laid down, that college studies — "the fundamentals" — should have for their chief and controlling object the training, discipline, *education* of the mental faculties; that the end and aim of a college curriculum — the prescribed and enforced plan of study — should be always the general development, direction, inspiration and education of the mental powers. Mental power, the power and faculty to organize and direct the forces of human society — the wants, desires, interests of men — is, in the only sense here under consideration, the object of education.

It appears to me perfectly obvious, and it has so appeared to the wisest educators in all modern times, that the foremost means to such an end is the study of language — the careful, thorough, long-continued study of the principles, structure and uses of language. The languages and the mathematics — the faculty and art of expression in language, and the habit and power of accurate, systematic reasoning — constitute and have in modern times constituted the means of education, in this sense. Along with these, as a matter of necessary information or knowledge, goes the study of history, geography and something of what we call natural science; but language and the mathematics are the chief disciplinary agents. Beyond a very narrow limit of mere utility for the commonest wants of life, the aim and value of the study of language and the mathematics, in schools and colleges, are disciplinary. Now, one seldom, if ever,

hears the study of the mathematics opposed or derided. They stand generally unchallenged, — why? Not because, beyond a very narrow limit, they are used or are expected to be used in the work of life. Like the use of the physical gymnasium and its appliances, the further study of the mathematics is left to the leisure, the taste or the sense of duty of the individual man when engaged in the active pursuits of life. There can be no doubt that a life-long pursuit or study of the mathematics would promote the strength and facility of the mental powers, just as a frequent or regular recurrence to the gymnasium or the athletic sports of youth would continue to give strength and endurance to the body.

Why, then, do the mathematics stand unchallenged in all our prescribed courses? I suppose no other answer can be given than that the mathematics are held valuable, essential for intellectual training; and that the fact of their almost complete disuse in after life is not held to affect their value as means of mental discipline in schools and colleges.

Now, I do not think the reasons why the study of language and the art of using it are held to be essential to the best mental training, are hard to understand. Language is the universal medium of thought, the chief, almost the only vehicle by which thought in all its forms is, or can be communicated. In a strict and very high sense, language *is* thought. Reason, reflection, emotion — all the highest powers of human nature — must seek language for expression and for influence on men. The tones of music, the tints of painting, the forms of sculpture are indeed modes of expressing thought, but ordinarily a man's power, his mental power, his power to influence other men, is measured by his power to express thought in language.

If, then, language is the vehicle of thought, the condition of making thought and the mental faculties, influential, the study of language—its nature, its structure, its uses, its capacities, its highest manifestations, its noblest and most powerful forms—is necessarily the first and highest instrumentality for developing, training, educating the mental powers—absolute in its necessity, first in order of time, highest in the scale of importance.

The study of language is, therefore, in no sense a mere prescription of the schools, an ancient educational superstition, a “college fetish.” It is a primordial necessity for the exercise of the human mind and reason, for the unlocking, the development of one’s own powers of mind, for influencing, guiding, and controlling the minds, actions, and lives of other men.

We are now, I think, at a point where the question becomes simply, what languages—what forms, what growths and developments of language,—are best suited for instruction and training in the knowledge and art of using language?

In answering this question, certainly no language, no literature can be put aside because remote in time; no language, no literature which in itself is of high value for its structure, its power or its beauty, can be described, as Mr. Adams has described the Greek language and literature, as “bearing no immediate relation to any living speech or literature of value.” I hold it to be obviously a matter of little or no moment in answering this question, whether the language selected as a “fundamental,” is now spoken on the continent of Europe or of America, or whether it disappeared as a spoken language two thousand years ago. The only consideration is, what can a given language, what can the study of a given language,

do for us to-day in the training of our mental faculties and in teaching us how to use the language to which we are born? In the matter of the choice of a language for this purpose I *might* appeal for what I confess I should consider a conclusive answer, to the opinions and practice of the learned and wise in these matters of all ages. For, without important exception, it might be said that in all times, and in all cultivated lands, since the conquering Roman eagles were planted on the Acropolis of Athens, and Greek national life expired, and her language in its ancient purity and prevalence ceased to be the spoken language of a powerful and independent nation, the Greek language has been regarded as the most perfect form of human speech, and its study has been regarded as the best means of intellectual training, and of teaching the art of using language.

But I am not quite willing to pause with this answer. Those who call the study of this language a "fetish," I am afraid, might still say that other superstitions, too, have survived all the mutations of time, and are still flourishing to-day.

In what, then, it may be useful to ask, consists the superior value of the Greek language as an instrument of educational training or a means of teaching us the best and most effective use of our own tongue?

I cannot pause here to attempt to explain how the great fact of the Greek language, the Greek literature, the Greek nationality, the Greek character, came about. No subject could well be more interesting or more important in some aspects of this theme. That on the little triangular peninsula of Greece, a region for the most part rocky and mountainous, a soil in general thin and poor; while Asia on the East presented only vast despotisms,



supported by all the appliances of Oriental servitude and superstition, without literature, without freedom, or the hope or desire of freedom; while Rome, on the West, was struggling for existence on the Italian peninsula, and the pall of barbarism was spread over all the rest of the continent of Europe; five or six centuries before the birth of Christ; more than twenty centuries before America was discovered; there arose and grew up a people and nation whose achievements in literature, oratory, poetry, philosophy, art, government — in all the arts of War and Peace — not only made them the foremost people of that age, but have extended and perpetuated their influence through all the phases of mediæval and modern history and civilization, and throughout all the cultivated nations of the modern world; — this, I conceive to be the most remarkable single fact, arising from what we are accustomed to call natural causes, which the whole history of man presents. But of all this no part can be touched here.

Great in all ways as is the fact of Ancient Greece — her valor, her art, all the forms of her social achievements — it is to the perfection of her language and literature that all the cultivated world has done its heartiest homage. In what then, I repeat, consists the value of the Greek language as an instrument of educational training for us?

It consists, first, in the fact that the Greek language is an *ancient* language; in the remoteness of the period in which it arose and took its form. The Greeks were the first people who played a conspicuous part in history, whose social life, politics, manners, literature, were the outgrowth and product of human reason and the spirit of freedom. The controlling forces which moved and in-

spired the people who gave Greece her character, and moulded her destinies, were reason and the love of freedom, personal, social, political freedom. But this language, in addition to being the mould and form which reason and the spirit of freedom first took, was also in a strict sense a *growth*, the result of the fusion, contact, intermingling of distinct dialects, the related parts or fragments of an organic whole.

No one who has ever examined this subject has failed to see that the Greek language and its literature were, in the completest and most absolute sense, *growths* — as natural and original as any growths of physical nature. The Greeks had no models. Their language, except in its most primitive forms, their literature in all its great forms, were original productions of their own. The three great factors of the language — the light and rude Æolic, the strong and grave Doric, the soft and liquid Ionic — each had its separate growth, influenced and determined simply by the great natural environments and conditions, of race, locality, and intercourse.

In its most perfect development, the Greek language presents, therefore, a linguistic growth which in the main, and to a degree greater than any other, was natural and regular, according to the genius and spirit of one people, yet not confined to one mould or form, but enriched and enlarged by the mingling of three principal, well-defined, well-developed dialects.

Not only was this the manner in which the Greek language arose, but in this process of growth, its structure and vocabulary became to the highest degree artistic, flexible and rich. Nothing here is more remarkable than its purity, its freedom from foreign influences. Leaving out of view those questions concerning the origin and original



relations of the different members of the great family of Indo-European languages — questions about which only learned specialists in philology can be profitably concerned — it may be safely said that no language, ancient or modern, is so original, so completely developed according to the spirit and genius of the people who used it.

To all these characteristics are to be added its beauty and power, and their development into the Greek literature.

It is difficult, of course, to demonstrate the truth of what has just been laid down, to those who choose to deny or discredit it, but among those who profess themselves competent to judge, or among those whom others would judge competent, I know of no important dissent from the claims which have now been made, namely, the pre-eminence of the Greek language among all languages in purity, power, and beauty, and the pre-eminence of the Greek literature among all literatures, in the perfection of its style and form.

And if it be true that the Greek language presents these qualities; if it is in a superior degree original and underived; in growth and development regular and natural; in vocabulary and form rich, flexible, powerful and artistic, then surely its study is adapted to the work of training and educating the human faculties in the knowledge and practice of language, the art of expression in language, which we have already seen, is at once the condition and means of the exercise of intellectual power.

The fact that it is an ancient language, the growth of an age when what we may call the intellectual order of the world was fixed, when the laws and methods of intellectual work and action were first determined, adds directly to its value as an implement of education. It is a

completed growth. Its fairest flowers, its richest fruits, appeared many centuries ago. There in the distant past it lies, the fair perfected growth of the young intellect of the world; product of intellectual forces which are still, always and everywhere, the source and inspiration of literature and science; true to nature and fact; pervaded, moulded, lit up by the very spirit of intellectual freedom, love of knowledge, and the sense of beauty.

To study Greek is, then, to study the sources of artistic, cultivated language; to study a language more original in its forms and structure, more powerful, more subtle, more expressive, than any living spoken language, as well as a literature unequalled in its exhibition of the capacities of human language.

For if the Greek language presents these advantages for the study of language — its origin, growth and structure — the Greek literature, the best products of this language in the period of its most perfect development, presents in form and style the highest specimens of the literary art. Here I desire to state the claims of Greek literature with accuracy and moderation. I do not mean by any means, and I do not understand the classicists so-called anywhere to mean, that Greek literature expresses the best results of human thought in science, morality, philosophy or religion. It does not; it could not. Greek literature was produced in an age of the most limited knowledge of the great subjects which most concern men in modern times. It is not in Greek literature of the classic period that we find what may be called the best results of human thought as applied to the material world of nature and life, or to those problems which concern the present moral duties or the future destiny of man. The materials of modern literature are incomparably

richer, the results of modern thought are immeasurably more valuable and beneficent.

Let us concede and assert all this; yet it remains true that the Greek mind was unequalled in its mastery of all the materials of knowledge then available for the discovery of the rules of thought, the absolute and true intellectual methods; while in a certain sense of proportion, a due measure and moderation of spirit in all their literary work, they have succeeded in giving unquestioned rules to all who have come after them. "For," says Lessing, "it was the privilege of the ancients never in any matter to do too much or too little." The result has been that while as sources of knowledge on most themes which concern the world of modern thought and life, Greek literature offers comparatively little, yet as the means of instruction in methods of thought, of composition, of literary arrangement, especially of all the methods and arts of expression in written or spoken language, unailing and absolute literary taste, no literature is comparable to the Greek.

Here we find again the qualities which we most need in the work of education — not the facts of science, nor the marvellous laws of the material world which modern science has discovered, not the final truths or highest principles of morality and religion of which the modern world is possessed; but a language, a form of speech, a method of intellectual work, of literary production, which has since stood to the whole literary world, including every cultivated age and nation, as the best example and final test of literary excellence; for I think the French critic, Ampère, expressed the feeling and judgment of those who have most deeply studied many literatures, in saying that whenever he came back from other studies and reopened Homer or Sophocles, he was forced to ex-

claim — *Voilà la beauté véritable et souveraine : jamais il ne s'est écrit rien de pareil chez les hommes.*

I wish to avoid all mere eulogy here, and I take leave to point out specifically where and in what, I think, lie these excellences of Greek literature.

There were in Greece, as there are now, four great divisions of literary work and activity, which engaged the highest efforts of the greatest minds — poetry, history, oratory, philosophy.

Now in each of these departments Greek literature presents one or two names to which I think succeeding ages offer no equals. Consider, first, the poetry of Homer, undoubtedly the most valuable poetical monument the world contains. The two great Homeric poems are concerned with themes apparently the most remote from the modern world. The characters are grotesque deities and legendary heroes. The scenes and events lie in the cloudland of mythology and tradition, having little foundation in historic fact. The sentiments of the poems are often, perhaps generally, those of a society but partially touched by the softening, humanizing influences of what we call civilization; yet these poems speak the same voice to all ages. They are simple pictures of human action and feeling; they do not seek primarily to teach morals, religion or politics. Their interest is purely dramatic; but no one who has ever read Homer intelligently, in the original, has failed to find here, to a degree quite unequalled elsewhere, the four qualities which Mr. Arnold has enumerated — rapidity of movement, plainness and directness of style, plainness and directness of ideas, and nobleness of treatment. These are, I suppose one may say with confidence, the very highest qualities of narrative or epic poetry. So that if it is desirable that

our youth should be taught by an acquaintance with the highest examples of such poetry, it is clear that the poems of Homer must be studied.

So in tragedy or tragic poetry, Æschylus stands in a similar relation to all the literature which has since been produced. Not only was he the founder and father of Greek Tragedy as a form of literary production, he was likewise, the inventor of the drama as a form of imitative Art, and his themes, his ideas, his tone, the color of his genius and spirit as now shown in all his principal works, are lofty, pure, earnest, in the highest degree. There are passages in the *Eumenides* and *Prometheus Bound* which as specimens of literary art and intellectual power, as well as of high and stern morality, are worthy to stand as models forever. Not to know Æschylus is not to know what was first in time, and is perhaps highest in conception and style in the whole range of tragic poetry and dramatic art.

And undoubtedly in the art of historical writing, in historical narrative, or disquisition, or judgment, there is no name that can be placed on an equal elevation with Thucydides. He was the first writer who treated history philosophically, that is, regarded its outward features as the strict result of causes which it is the historian's proper task to discover and point out. His tone is judicial and elevated, his analysis deep and penetrating. But I can never help thinking that the literary merits of his work form his highest title to our study and reverence. He is a great example of Lessing's remark already quoted. His principles of art were so fundamental that no feelings aroused by the events of his narratives ever betray or hurry him beyond the just limit of expression or judgment.

His relations, too, to the growth of Greek prose give a

special value to his writings as studies in language. He wrote in what has been called an "ante-grammatical age," and he fixed as much as any one the rules and canons of artistic prose writing of which he was at once author and exemplar.

But in the great art of oratory, the most powerful and attractive of all forms of literary art, Greek literature presents Demosthenes. For my own part, there is hardly a career in statesmanship, and the conduct and shaping of public affairs, which seems to me better deserving the study of the statesman of to-day. The period in which he lived, the forces with which he dealt, the results which depended on the events with which he was connected, form a chapter of political history of the highest intrinsic interest and value. His public aims and methods, his personal and public character, his devotion to high principles and ideals of duty, make him an historical figure worthy of perpetual observation and admiration. But in the field of oratory, in the preparation and delivery of public speeches, lies his pre-eminent claim to greatness. Here it is hard to say which of many supreme merits he exhibits in highest degree. A severity of style which never fails, a subordination of all the arts and devices of rhetoric to the orator's great purpose; but with all this, elevation of sentiment, power of demonstration, wealth of illustration, passion of appeal and persuasion, patriotic ardor — a combination to which no trait of power or beauty seems wanting, and which apparently exhausts the capacity of language — this is the oratory of Demosthenes.

In the field of philosophical speculation, the search for ideal truth, logical, metaphysical, ethical, psychological, and political, Greek literature has given us Plato. And of the works of Plato it may be said that, apart from the



thought which they contain, they are true literary masterpieces.

Of Plato's philosophical speculations and conclusions, this also is true, that the impulse which he gave to speculative thought, and the methods he pursued have left the deepest traces in all subsequent thought and literature. "Plato," says Emerson, "is philosophy, and philosophy, Plato, — at once the glory and the shame of mankind, since neither Saxon nor Roman have availed to add any idea to his categories."

Then came Aristotle, who covered the whole range of thought of his age, carrying speculative philosophy to its highest results, and devising and stating the methods and laws of all intellectual inquiry. He was also the first writer who can be said to have written the history of philosophy, while in the art of classification, in accumulating and systematizing knowledge or facts, and in the scientific method of treating all subjects, in analytic insight and power, he remains still the first in time, and in many respects the greatest of the world's teachers.

Such, in a meagre and most limited statement, are some of the contents of Greek literature. In all the departments of intellectual exertion to which they severally belong, these are the original sources, the earliest great examples. Their influence, as a matter of fact, has been powerful and continuous in all the intellectual history and progress of the world. All literature of value, as a matter of fact, has been strongly affected by the Greek authors whom I have named. However much the objects and materials of literary art have changed, however many of the conclusions or teachings of Greek philosophy have been disproved and rejected, the intellectual processes and

literary standards which Greek literature first illustrated and enforced, have survived and are in use now.

No man, then, can aspire to become cultivated in these leading departments of intellectual effort, or to become familiar with the progress and results of the intellectual history of mankind, unless he deeply studies Greek literature.

And if to this consideration we add what is indisputable and obvious, that translations can never perfectly, and rarely adequately reproduce the meanings and impressions of the original works, the conclusion cannot be avoided that an acquaintance with Greek literature, through a knowledge of the Greek language, is and must be, whether required by schools and colleges or not, an indispensable means for laying the foundation of the broadest culture, the most useful and effective mental training. The Greek language and literature are thus, whether we will or not, a "fundamental requirement," "without which," in the words of Mr. Adams, "no one can pursue a specialty to (the highest) advantage."

As soon as one really reflects on this matter, and seriously inquires what is, by its nature and office, "fundamental," to a high, or strong, or useful, or adequate training and culture for the work of modern life, he finds that by no convention of scholars so-called, in deference to no long-cherished superstition, through the worship of no "fetish," but by a necessity arising from the plain facts of the world's intellectual and literary history, the Greek language and literature are the only key to much that is the most valuable intellectual and literary treasure of the world.

But not the least, perhaps the greatest superiority of Greek literature is in what is usually called its style — the quality which Mr. Lowell has lately reminded us, is "the



only warrant of permanence in literature." By this term is not meant the mere artful use or arrangement of words and sentences, or any devices or conceits of expression. Greek literary art is moral in its qualities. It consists in the simple honest adaptation of language to its proper uses and ends. We hear often such phrases as "classic tinsel," "classic formalism." No one who knows Greek literature has failed to see that Greek literary art, Greek literary taste proscribed, in theory and practice, all mere ornaments of language, all verbal tricks or expedients, and sought to present thought in natural, simple, noble forms alone. To speak or write classically is, in truth, to speak or write, above all things, with the most direct reference to the simple setting forth of thought; of tinsel, of formalism, Homer, Æschylus, Thucydides, Demosthenes, Plato, give us absolutely nothing.

But the Greek literary spirit went deeper than this. It imposed and developed a moderation of tone, a justness of judgment, a measure and repose of feeling, a proportion of treatment on all subjects, for which there is no other present term of description than *classical*.

Here, then, are the studies and examples which are fit to train the youth of all times and nations in the noblest forms and uses of language, to teach and enforce true literary art and taste, — which ever consists in using language for the natural, direct, attractive, and powerful expression of ideas.

I state these results of an examination of the Greek language and literature, and the most ample proofs might be given by examples if time sufficed. But perhaps I may be allowed to illustrate the genuine simplicity and directness of Greek thought, even in poetry, in contrast with modern, by a single example.

The passage near the close of the 18th Book of the Iliad, which describes the newly-forged armor of Achilles, the workmanship of Vulcan, and the gift of Thetis to the ideal martial hero of the Greeks, has long been reckoned one of the finest in classical literature. In closing his famous 7th of March speech, Mr. Webster, alluding to the vast extent of our territory, said: "We realize on a mighty scale, the beautiful description of the ornamental border of the buckler of Achilles: —

"Now, the broad shield complete, the artist crowned  
With his last hand, and poured the ocean round;  
In living silver seemed the waves to roll,  
And beat the buckler's verge, and bound the whole."

This is Pope's paraphrase, I will not say translation, of two lines of Homer's description of the shield of Achilles, and it is a striking illustration of what Mr. Arnold calls Pope's artificial, intellectualized, literary manner and language.

Now in contrast with this, let one read the original lines of Homer:

*Ἐν δ' ἐτίθει ποταμῶιο μέγα σθένος Ὠκεανοῖο,  
ἄντυγα πᾶρ πνυμίτην σάκεος πύκα ποιητοῖο,*

and he will know what is meant when it is said that simplicity and plainness of expression are found in the highest degree in Homer, and how by the simplest means the Greek genius reached the highest and noblest results in poetry.

Mr. Adams gives us a list of English authors whom he holds up as worthy to supersede the Greek authors, who now represent for us the Greek language and literature, but there are not more than two or three among them all, who did not owe the training which gave them their mastery of the English language to studies of the classical lan-

guages and literatures. This is true, equally true, of any similar list of great writers in German and French. Goethe was a German-Greek. Voltaire was a French-Greek. I do not mean to say that in later times great writers have not appeared who, out of the existing materials of modern languages, have wrought the most valuable results, without any direct knowledge of the classical languages. But I lay it down as a truth which cannot be shaken, that no man ignorant of Greek can read any great English, or German, or French author — for example, Shakespeare or Milton, Pascal or Voltaire, Goethe or even Schiller — with the same pleasure and full appreciation as if he had been once trained to a fair knowledge of the Greek language. To confine our studies to modern tongues, is to cut ourselves off from an acquaintance with the sources of a great part of the richness, the power and the beauty of all that is great in modern literature. I trust I am not, more than Mr. Adams, pleased with literary formalism and tinsel, or the poor imitations of Demosthenes and Cicero which he satirizes. I think, plain, direct, honest English is the highest need of our times in language and literature. The words of St. Paul are applicable here: “I had rather speak five words with my understanding than ten thousand words in a tongue.” Better the plainest, most untaught English than all formal imitations of the highest models. But to follow Homer, to know and be influenced by Homer, is to speak with a directness and simplicity which scarcely any modern writer would dare to observe. To write as Thucydides wrote, to speak as Demosthenes spoke, is to reject ornament, to spurn verbal cunning and contrivances, and to hold the whole mind intent only on the clearest, directest expression of thought. A true revival of the classic spirit, a

true *renaissance*, would give us back some part of the austere beauty, the severe simplicity, and the majestic power which modern literature generally lacks.

And Greek discipline and taste were not confined among the Greeks—in their nature they could not be confined—to letters alone; they displayed themselves not less notably in architecture, painting and sculpture. The only great sculpture which the world possesses to-day, I think it correct to say, is Greek—the product either of ancient Greek hands, or of those of later days who caught their whole spirit and power from studies of Greek art. Michael Angelo was as true a Greek in spirit as Phidias or Ictinus; and his sculptures which one sees now in Italy are simply the works of a great Italian-Greek of the fifteenth century.

When, therefore, Mr. Adams declares that he prefers the German tongue and its literature to the Greek, “whether viewed as a thing of use, as an accomplishment, or as a source of pleasure,” I can only reply that as a matter of fact, the German tongue and its literature, like all the cultivated modern tongues and literatures, is widely and deeply pervaded by the influence of Greek and classical studies. Goethe, its greatest literary name, whom Mr. Adams declares “the equal, at least, of Sophocles,” was as true a Greek as Michael Angelo; and it is Goethe, too, who has said, “I wish all success to those who are for preserving to the literature of Greece and Rome, its predominant place in education.”

Mr. Adams, throughout his address, proclaims his own ignorance of Greek. The weight of his charge against Harvard is that it “compelled him directly and indirectly to devote the best part of his school life to acquiring a

confessedly superficial knowledge of two dead languages." He declares that at Harvard College thirty years ago, "a limp superficiality was all-pervasive"; and as the result, he says: "I have now forgotten the Greek alphabet, and I cannot read all the Greek characters if I open my Homer." I am bound, I suppose, to accept these statements as to Mr. Adams's attainments in Greek, though I find it difficult to understand how one who, as he himself states, "studied Greek with patient fidelity," and who declares that "there are not many modern graduates who can say as I can, that they have, not without enjoyment, read the Iliad through in the original, from its first line to its last," can also say, "I have now forgotten the Greek alphabet."

But if the time given by Mr. Adams to Greek had been given to German, if his study of German had been characterized by a "limp superficiality," and if now he had forgotten the German alphabet and could not read all the German characters if he opened his Goethe, does Mr. Adams think he would have been better prepared for the work of modern life? Mr. Adams's positions here seem strangely and carelessly inconsistent. He declares that he never had more than "a confessedly superficial knowledge" of Greek, and that even that has faded out till he has now forgotten the Greek characters, and from that premise he proceeds to the conclusion, so far as his individual experience goes, that the compulsory study of Greek should be abandoned by our schools and colleges, and some modern language be allowed to take its place, at the option of the student. But if the failure of Greek to prepare him for modern life was due to the "limp superficiality" of the instruction and requirements of the Harvard of his day, does he think a similar method in

German would have had better results? Of course, he does not. Mr. Adams justly anathematizes superficiality in anything as "contemptible as well as dangerous, and apt to invite defeat." It is fair, then, to ask Mr. Adams what right the failure of the Greek of Harvard thirty years ago to accomplish desired results in his case gives him to conclude that Greek rightly taught, or, to use his own words, "Greek really studied, lovingly learned," would not accomplish all that a college "fundamental" ought to accomplish?

Does Mr. Adams think that the mere fact that German or French may be chosen by the student in place of Greek, would change the "limp superficiality" which he charges upon the Harvard of his day, into a "scope and thoroughness" of instruction and attainment, to repeat his own words, "which should set at defiance the science of cramming?" It is surely hard to see why German should be taught with greater thoroughness than Greek in Harvard or other colleges, and unless such is the result, it is hard to see what gain could come in this respect from admitting German to an equality with Greek as a college "fundamental."

But at this point I am glad to express my agreement with Mr. Adams in all he says or can say of the duty of thoroughness, and of the absolute demand for better, more thorough, more inspiring instruction in Greek, as well as in all languages. The real force of Mr. Adams's challenge and arraignment of Greek lies, I think, in the degree of truth which most college graduates will find in his description of the methods and standards of instruction in that language. I have said that I do not believe Mr. Adams's strictures of Harvard are accurate or just in degree. My own observation leads me to think that Greek



is at least taught as well as German in our schools and colleges, but that a great and in some respects a radical change is needed in our methods of instruction in all the languages — a change which may be generally described as from an artificial to a natural method, from a predominating attention to matters of syntax and grammar to an effort to teach a better knowledge of the language as a vehicle of thought and a more adequate appreciation and enjoyment of the literature which it embodies.

When Mr. Adams gives us what he represents as the experiences of the Adams family for four generations, he might be regarded as speaking with authority. But the Adams family belongs to the public, and the lessons to be drawn from the history and experiences of its members are not confined to such as those who are lineal representatives of that family may choose to set forth, but they are such only as the facts of their history establish.

It may be remarked that by recalling the fact that John Adams himself, near the close of his long life, was unqualifiedly convinced of the pre-eminent value of the study of Greek, so that he specially provided, in those closing years, in founding the academy which bears his name, for a "schoolmaster learned in the Greek and Roman languages," as well as to some other very characteristic provisions which he made, intended to secure thoroughness in the Greek and Hebrew languages in that academy; Mr. C. F. Adams, Jr., gives us the most convincing proof possible of the value which John Adams deliberately set upon his own classical training. To be sure, our present Mr. Adams tells us that this was "bowing low before the fetish;" that "instead of taking a step forward, the old man actually took one backward"; and that "this was fetish-wor-

ship, pure and simple." And he then brings forward, as the only evidences of the correctness of such opinions, two passages from the correspondence of John Adams, written respectively in 1813 and 1814, in one of which, at the age of seventy-eight, John Adams tells Thomas Jefferson that he had recently been reading Isocrates and Dionysius Halicarnassensis, and that he found that "if he looked a word to-day, in less than a week he had to look it again," and that "it was to little better purpose than writing letters on a pail of water"; and in the other of which, in his seventy-ninth year, he writes to Jefferson, that thirty years before he read Plato, and learned little or nothing from him.

He then dismisses the great patriot and statesman, with the remark: "As a sufficiently cross-examined witness on the subject of Greek literature, I think John Adams may now quit the stand"!

I do not think this will be likely to lead the world to forget that the life of John Adams was one of incessant labor and immeasurable service for his country, covering a period of considerably more than a half-century of our most eventful history; that he received a classical education at Harvard; that even at the age of seventy-nine he was not obliged to confess that he had forgotten the Greek alphabet; but throughout his laborious and anxious life he never forgot or abandoned his classical studies, and at last gave, as we have seen, the most signal proof of his estimate of their value to himself by founding an Academy in which the study of Greek and Latin was made "fundamental," with Hebrew, "if thought advisable."

The real life-long testimony of John Adams is to the superior value of classical studies. There is no doubt that familiarity with the French language would have been invaluable to John Adams in his diplomatic career, but he



had in its stead that stoutness of spirit and flexibility of mind which enabled him at forty-two to undertake the task of learning French, and to accomplish as a diplomatist at the council-boards of Europe what he himself always regarded as the greatest triumphs of his life.

I know no reason why the education of Harvard is not entitled, on all grounds, to regard John Adams, as he evidently regarded himself, as its debtor for the foundation of that mental equipment which made him as Jefferson describes him in the debates which led to our Declaration of Independence, "our Colossus on the floor. Not graceful, not elegant, not always fluent in his public addresses, he yet came out with a power, both of thought and expression, which moved us from our seats."

Mr. Webster in his oration on Adams and Jefferson says: "They were scholars, ripe and good scholars; widely acquainted with ancient as well as modern literature, and not altogether uninstructed in the deeper sciences. . . . I would hazard the opinion that, if we could ascertain all the causes which gave them eminence and distinction in the midst of the great men with whom they acted, we should find not among the least, their early acquisitions in literature, the resources which it furnished, the promptitude and facility which it communicated, and the wide field it opened for analogy and illustration; giving them thus, on every subject, a larger view and a broader range, as well for discussion as for the government of their own conduct."

I set the testimony of John Adams himself, and the judgment of Daniel Webster as to the sources of his power in public life, against the conclusions which Mr. C. F. Adams, Jr., would have us draw.

Of John Quincy Adams, his grandson says, "I would

for the sake of my argument, give much could I correctly weigh what he owed during his public life to the living languages he had picked up in Europe, against what he owed to the requirements of Harvard College." I think the friends of classical education might safely join in this wish. Very sure I am that the accidents of boyhood, what our author twice calls "the languages which he *picked up* in Europe" had no considerable part in giving to John Quincy Adams that marvellous mental equipment which made him, as his grandson justly thinks, more than the equal of any one whom he ever met in debate. I do not believe such a training was "picked up" from any source or in any sense. I believe it was the result of careful, laborious training in which classical studies did their share. His attainments in the continental languages of Europe, like all our most valuable acquisitions, were the result of thorough, systematic and long-continued studies. They were undoubtedly of the greatest value to him in personal intercourse as a diplomatist in Europe, a period, however, of only fifteen years. For a period of fifteen years, then, in a public career of more than half a century, the modern languages were, in the work of foreign diplomacy, very valuable instruments in the hands of John Quincy Adams. Let all this be conceded ungrudgingly. But in the more than third of a century which lies outside of his residence aboard, he was a Senator of the United States, Professor of Rhetoric and Belles Lettres at Harvard, nominated and confirmed a Judge of the Supreme Court of the United States, eight years Secretary of State, President of the United States, closing the longest, and in many ways the most remarkable public career in our history by seventeen years of service as a member of the National House of Representatives. What were the influ-

ences which most strongly sustained that arduous and prolonged career? Let John Quincy Adams answer for himself. In 1809, at the close of his term of service as Professor of Harvard College, he used these parting words to his classes; — words which for true pathos and eloquence are not easily matched in American oratory — “ If at this moment, in which so many circumstances concur to give solemnity to our feelings, I may be permitted to use with you the freedom, as I feel for you the solicitude of a parent, and to express in the form of advice, those ardent wishes for your future happiness, which beat with every pulsation of my heart, I would entreat you to cherish and to cultivate in every stage of your lives that taste for literature and science, which is first sought here as in their favorite abodes. I would urge it upon you, as the most effectual means of extending your respectability and usefulness in the world. I would press it with still more earnestness upon you as an inexhaustible source of enjoyment and of consolation. . . . At no hour of your life will the love of letters ever oppress you as a burden, or fail you as a resource. In the vain and foolish exultation of the heart, which the brighter prospects of life will sometimes excite, the pensive portress of science shall call you back to the sober pleasures of her holy cell. In the mortifications of disappointment her soothing voice shall whisper security and peace. In social converse with the mighty dead of ancient days, you will never smart under the galling sensations of dependence upon the mighty living of the present; and in your struggles with the world, should a crisis ever occur, when even friendship may deem it prudent to desert you; when even your country may seem ready to abandon herself and you; when even priest and Levite shall come and look on you, and pass by on

the other side, seek refuge, my unfailling friends, and be assured you will find it in the friendship of Laelius and Scipio ; in the patriotism of Cicero, Demosthenes and Burke."

Some of Mr. Adams's most dogmatic expressions of opinion I find it difficult even to understand, much more to account for, and I must, at least, express my astonishment that Mr. Adams should say of John Quincy Adams, that "as an imitator he was as bad as Chatham. More could not be said. That much he owed to Harvard College and its little Latin and less Greek." And this is said of the most magnificent orator who ever swayed the British Parliament! "As bad as Chatham"! of whom Prof. Goodrich says: "It would be difficult, in the whole range of oratory, to find more perfect models of style and diction for the study and imitation of the young orator. . . . Nothing can be more easy, varied and natural than the style of his speeches. There is no mannerism about them. They have this infallible mark of genius, they make every one feel, that if placed in like circumstances, he would have said exactly the same things in the same manner."\* But I trust it is superfluous to defend or praise the style of Lord Chatham.

Perhaps, however, the most remarkable passage in Mr. Adams's address is this: "It is asserted that the compulsory study of Greek has not been discontinued in foreign colleges; and yet, as we all know, the students of those colleges have an ever-increasing mastery of the living tongues. I do not propose to enter this branch of the discussion. I do not profess to be informed as to what the universities of other lands have done. . . . I hold it sufficient for my purpose to reply that we have to deal with America, and not with Germany, or France, or Great Britain."

---

\* Goodrich's *British Eloquence*, p. 75.

This is coming dangerously near, I think, to the position of our American politician to whom Mr. Adams alludes, who, in recent financial discussions, in answer to arguments drawn from the experience of European nations, declared "he did not care for 'abroad'; he was legislating for America."

But I do care for "abroad," and so, I suppose, do all reasonable men. It happens that the most thorough and direct test of which we have any knowledge, of the comparative value of the classical and non-classical training in preparatory schools, has lately been made in Prussia.

In Prussia there exist, side by side, two classes of schools, called *Gymnasia* and *Realschulen*. The former prescribe a classical course of study; the latter dispense wholly with Greek, reduce the time given to Latin nearly one-half, introduce English, give more attention to German, double the time devoted to French, more than double that given to physical and natural sciences, and increase by one-half the time given to mathematics. It will thus be seen that the Prussian *Realschulen* do what Mr. Adams would have Harvard do, or more precisely, they do what Mr. Adams would have Harvard permit its students to do, at their option — omit Greek entirely, reduce Latin to mere rudimentary acquirements, and devote the time thus gained to French and German, or other modern languages.

In 1870, at the instance of not a few who looked as Mr. Adams does upon Greek and Latin studies, the Prussian Minister of Public Instruction, by royal Decree, conferred on Prussian subjects who had completed the full course of instruction in the *Realschulen* of the first rank, the right to enter any Prussian university for the purpose of studying mathematics, the physical and natural sciences, or the modern languages — a privilege heretofore only enjoyed by the graduates of the Prussian *Gymnasia*.

In 1880, when this experiment had been in operation over eight years, the faculty of the University of Berlin presented an opinion or report to the Minister of Public Instruction upon the results of the admission of graduates of Realschulen to the University. It would be difficult, I think, to have devised a more direct or more impartial test of the results in mental training of the classical and non-classical systems of preparatory education. It will be observed that the Realschüler were admitted to the University courses in mathematics, physical and natural sciences, and the modern languages; in other words, to the higher courses of study, in the very branches to which the time of the Realschulen had been chiefly given. Every advantage which could come, therefore, from a special training, so-called, for the higher courses of study, lay with the Realschüler members of the University in the courses to which they are admitted.

The faculty of the University of Berlin at the time of the report to which I now refer, consisted of thirty-six members, including such well-known names as Curtius, Zeller, Mommsen and Hofmann. Summarily stated, the professors and instructors in mathematics, in astronomy, in chemistry, and in zoölogy bear uniform testimony to the superior capacity and success of the graduates of the Gymnasia in the pursuit of those branches of University study. But what is more significant for our present purposes, the instructors in the modern languages, particularly Professor Zupitza, instructor in the English language and literature, and Professor Müllenhoff, instructor in the German language and literature, report a distinct superiority of the graduates of Gymnasia over the Realschüler in the study of these languages. Professor Müllenhoff says:

“Judging from my experience, it is simply impossible



for one who has been prepared in the Realschule to acquire a satisfactory scientific education. No man acquires it by means of the modern languages alone, nor without a solid foundation in the training of the Gymnasium."

Professor Hofmann, whose greatest renown has been won in the physical sciences, remarks that, "Students from the Realschulen, in consequence of their being conversant with a greater number of facts, outrank as a rule, those from the Gymnasia during the experimental exercises of the first semester, but that relation is soon reversed, and given equal abilities, the latter almost invariably carry off the honors in the end, being mentally better trained and having acquired in a higher degree the ability to understand and solve scientific problems."

Professor Hofmann, likewise, in his inaugural address on assuming the Rectorship of the University of Berlin in October, 1880, declares that "all efforts to find a substitute for the classical languages, whether in mathematics, in the modern languages, or in the natural sciences, have been hitherto unsuccessful, — that after long and vain search, we must always come back finally to the result of centuries of experience, that the surest instrument that can be used in training the mind of youth is given us in the study of the language, the literature and the works of art of classical antiquity."

"Idealty in academic study," he observes, "unselfish devotion to science for its own sake, and that unshackled activity of thought which is at once the condition and consequence of such devotion, retire more and more into the background as the classical groundwork of our mental life found in the Gymnasium is withdrawn from the pre-University course." And he adds: "I have never heard a student from the Gymnasium express a wish that he might



have received his training in a *Realschule*; how often, on the other hand, have I met with young men prepared in the *Realschule*, who grievously regretted that they had never had part in the training of the *Gymnasium*”!

It should here be added, that in reply to an official request in 1870, for opinions on the admission of graduates of *Realschulen* to the Universities, or to certain courses therein, the faculties of all the Prussian Universities besides that of Berlin, eight in number, gave formal opinions, most of which were in harmony with those of the Berlin faculties.

Efforts have been made, naturally, to break the force of this remarkable testimony, and one writer has ventured to assert, first, that the Berlin report “has nothing to do with this question”; and second, that, “upon investigation it turns out to be squarely on the other side of the point in dispute”!\*

That some of the conditions of this experiment were, of necessity, somewhat more favorable to the *Gymnasium* than the *Realschule*, owing chiefly to the fact that the former schools are older, better organized, and better equipped, and probably draw a larger ratio of their pupils from the better-educated and more intelligent classes of the people, may be conceded. Something, too, may possibly be allowed for the predilections, not to say prejudices, of the University professors and instructors in favor of the schools in which they themselves were trained — though of such partiality one surely sees small trace in Mr. Adams or his present supporters, — but when all reasonable concessions of whatever sort have been made, it still remains that here, for a period of full eight years, the University has been opened to students prepared very nearly, if not

---

\* Popular Science Monthly, January, 1884.

wholly, on the plan, or by the studies advocated by Mr. Adams, for the pursuit of those branches with which all their preparatory studies are most closely connected; and that the almost unanimous testimony of those who have had charge of the experiment is that the graduates of schools where Greek is entirely and Latin nearly omitted, and the modern languages substituted,—in other words, where the course is non-classical or “modern,”—are less successful in the pursuit of the studies for which they have had special preparatory training than are the graduates of schools which retain and enforce the undiminished study of Greek and Latin—in other words, a classical course.

If this is not a conclusive test of the opposing theories which we are discussing, I think it may justly be described as the most direct and most nearly conclusive experience which has yet been secured, and probably as conclusive as any likely to be secured so long as the present question remains within the range of discussion. To equalize absolutely all the conditions of such a trial would require us either to reverse the past, or to wait for a long period in the future before concluding which plan of study to adopt, whereas the opponents of a classical course insist that we shall take our decision at once, with such lights as we have—among which, I repeat, I see none clearer or more trustworthy than this Prussian experiment.

I certainly do not think it will do for Mr. Adams to say here, as he does, in answer to arguments derived from the experiences of foreign Universities, that “the educational and social conditions are not the same here as in those countries”; that “our home life is different; our schools are different; wealth is otherwise distributed.” What has all this to do with the effect of a given training upon the mental powers and capacities of the youth of Prussia or

America? Does Mr. Adams think the result of classical training may be good in the case of Prussian youths and bad in the case of American? Indeed, it is precisely because he thinks the present German language and life and thought are so much nearer to ours that he would place the language and literature of that country on an equality with Greek, and yet he says in the same breath in which he extols the German language and literature, "I do not profess to be informed as to what the universities of other lands have done"!

I have hitherto spoken exclusively of Greek, because it is there that Mr. Adams makes his chief attack. "Latin," he says, "I will not stop to contend over. That is a small matter. . . . It has its modern uses. Not only is it directly the mother tongue of all south-western Europe, but it has by common consent been adopted in scientific nomenclature. . . . With a knowledge of the rudiments of Latin as a requirement for admission to college, I am not here to quarrel."

The unquestionable fact here is that as the study of Natural and Moral Philosophy, as well as the theory and practice of all the fine arts, began with the Greeks; the Latin language borrowed from the Greek nearly all the terms and words which constituted the nomenclature of those studies. And the same influence and results pervade all the modern languages of Europe.

But not only is this true of studies — sciences and arts — which originated with the Greeks, but the sciences which have had almost their entire growth in modern times are equally linked with the Greek language. This is especially true of the nomenclature of botany and chemistry. Linnæus and Lavoisier had direct and almost *ex-*

*clusive* recourse to the Greek for the nomenclature of the sciences with which their names are associated. And to-day, in all the advances of modern science, in those practical inventions which in the last thirty years have so greatly affected the conditions of human society, the same recurrence to the Greek language for the appropriate terminology has taken place.

Another leading argument of Mr. Adams for putting the modern languages on an equality with the ancient as "fundamentals" is that both cannot be learned. Greek and Latin, he thinks, for want of time, are incompatible with French and German. "My children," he declares, "cannot both be fitted for college and taught the modern languages."

I regard this position as wholly incorrect. I know of no reason why both French and German and Greek and Latin may not be acquired by the youth of this country. Without doubt the ready and idiomatic use, for conversation, of French and German must, I suppose in all cases, come from a residence in the countries where those languages are commonly spoken, but a mastery for all the purposes of the study and reading of the literature of the French and German languages, as well as the quick acquisition of facility of speech, whenever the opportunity or need comes, can be obtained in almost any community in this country. Latin and Greek are not usually begun, and I think should not be begun, before the age of fourteen or fifteen. There is no reason of which I am aware why French and German may not be constantly studied between the ages of eight and fourteen or fifteen; that is, for a term of six or seven years. I think the facilities for such a course are to-day quite as abundant as those for the study of Latin and Greek. I mean here facilities wholly

outside of special or private instruction. Except in conversational ease and mastery of French or German, the American boy can to-day, as a rule, acquire the same command of those languages that John Quincy Adams and Charles Francis Adams acquired in their boyhood in Europe. He can become proficient in the reading and writing of those languages between the ages of eight and fifteen, before he is called on to begin his Latin and Greek—the period of life when the study of French or German can be pursued to best advantage.

After graduation the student will have, under this plan, what Mr. Adams calls “the tools of his trade,” “the avenues to modern life and thought”; and at the same time he will have whatever classical studies can give him. Certainly I have never discovered that boys who study French and German are more faithful in their work than those who study Latin and Greek, or that the teachers of the former are in any respect superior to those of the latter.

It has been my task here to defend the position of Greek as an invariable part of our training, as a means which never can be omitted in the most useful and practical preparation for the work of life—modern life—as Mr. Adams describes it, “this active, bustling, hard-hitting, many-tongued world, caring nothing for authority, and little for the past; but full of its living thought and living issues.” But I have seen and felt the high utility in life of a thorough knowledge of the two great continental tongues of Europe. The literatures of France and Germany have a value which can be hardly overestimated. It is true, I could never say as Mr. Adams does, that in richness and beauty, I thought the French literature equalled the Latin. I certainly never could prefer Montaigne to

Cicero, and I should be forced to believe that a different estimate must be the result of some degree of ignorance of Latin. In all the qualities which make up the value of Greek for our educational uses, I feel bound to say I place Latin unquestionably next. As a language, merely, as a study in the art of expression, it can be placed second only to Greek, while as a literature, a record of expressed thought, I know no names in French or German literature which in a just estimate I think are to be put on the level with Cicero, Tacitus, Horace and Virgil. But I do feel that the modern languages are apt to be undervalued, and I also feel that a larger place is due to these studies in our academies and colleges, and that more space can be allowed them without injury to the classical course.

Other considerations and arguments of equal weight and value must be omitted here; but I cannot forbear to say again, that it is with special regard to the characteristics of modern life — the life which now surrounds us, — the graphic pictures of which are certainly one of the most striking and valuable features of Mr. Adams's address; it is in reference to that life with which we are now associated, that I should most earnestly oppose the proposition which Mr. Adams presents; for I take issue with the idea which is suggested by him, when, referring to the function and work of the college, he says: "When one is given work to do, it is well to prepare one's self for that specific work." I say, no college student has any "specific work" given him, in this sense, to "prepare for." No college student knows or can know to what work life will call or direct him. Mr. Adams's account of his own career furnishes a good example of this fact. This is the period when, to recur to Mr. Adams's strong phrase, "the best thing we can do is to let our minds soak and tan in the



vats of literature." If it be true, as I think it is, of other periods of our lives, that

"The world is too much with us ; late and soon  
Getting and spending, *we lay waste our powers,*"

it is important, beyond estimate, that the period of student life should be guarded from the premature intrusion of the cares and preoccupations which soon enough will fix the nature and limit of our activities, if they do not narrow the outlook and darken the pathway of life.

Therefore, there is in my judgment no study so valuable, so exactly adapted, as a preparation for the work to be done in public or private life, here in America to-day, and the study of the Greek language and literature; and I have the conviction, that this study is, and will be, whether it remains a part of our prescribed courses or not, the real basis and test of culture, of that mental training and equipment which distinguishes the educated from the uneducated or partly educated, as surely as gold is and will be, whether statutes ordain it or not, in the world's real measure of pecuniary value. No bustle of business nor din of progress, no clamor of politics nor pride of science, I have perfect faith, will ever for long overbear the spirit in man to which poetry, oratory, philosophy and literature answer; and so, finally, it must result that this study now described in a few high places, as a "fetish," will be more ardently pursued, more wisely taught, more intelligently valued, by all those, whether in academical or practical life, who believe that the highest secular guaranty of the strength and permanence of our civilization is the diffusion of sound and thorough liberal education.



APPENDIX.



## APPENDIX.

---

[Professor Edouard Zeller, of Berlin, the author of the following article in the *Deutsche Rundschau* of Berlin, for March, 1884, is a German scholar and author, especially fitted to expound the general subject of which he here treats. He is the author of *Platonische Studien* and *Die Philosophie der Griechen*, as well as of many other works of learning and scholarship. The whole article, which is entitled *Ueber die Bedeutung der Sprache und des Sprachunterrichts für das geistige Leben* is of profound interest, but only its concluding pages can be given here.]

---

Judging from a superficial view of the matter, it might appear as best adapted to the purpose, that the mother tongue of the scholar should be selected as the general basis for this instruction in languages because its grammatical structure and rules, with which he is already familiar, might give him a clearer comparative view, and thus enable him to draw for himself illustrations from it. But in reality this is not the case. It is a well known fact, that children as a rule are wont to display the *least* interest in the grammatical pursuit of their own language. For the mature scholar, who investigates scientifically, to be sure, it has a peculiar charm; but the average boy cannot conceive why he should be made to acquire, through such an irksome task, what he in reality supposes himself to know already.

When he is being instructed in a foreign language he readily understands, that by this process he is to learn to speak it or to read its literature; his progress displays to him an approximation to this aim; he feels that his knowledge is increasing. The reasons for this lie in the very nature of the case. But the value of a methodical, grammatical instruction in language for the purpose of cultivating the mind, as we have seen, consists chiefly in this, that the scholar is enabled through it, to master the mental faculties, of which language is *the expression and product*, mindful of, and in keeping with rules to be brought to bear, with accurate distinction of its constituent elements. To penetrate into the spirit of a language, to speak it correctly and to use it idiomatically, he must know its forms and rules, which mean far more than a mere practically acquired usage of the same. Again, as we can only secure a clear conception of an object by comparing it with others, by finding out what this object has in common with others, and what peculiar features distinguish it from others, we have to apply the same principle to matters pertaining to language. The structure and peculiarity of our own language is revealed to us only by comparison with other languages. Through this comparison we learn to distinguish the general drifts of thought expressed in every language and their correlation, from mere words, or forms and compounds; it is evident that such a power of distinction is not attainable by one who has acquired a language by mere force of habit and practice. Grammar becomes a training in logic to us through this comparison. The methodical study of a foreign language yields better results for the grammatical understanding of one's native tongue, than the exclusive study of our own grammar; and for the

purpose of cultivating the mind generally, comparison is far more appropriate, because it involves the necessity of tracing ideas from words and of investigating the rules from a custom which has become second nature to him. "That may be the case," they say, "but if one or several foreign languages must be learned, why should we choose for this purpose such as cannot be put to practical use later on in life, which will soon be forgotten after leaving school? Why not French instead of Latin, English instead of Greek, both of which must be studied afterwards under any circumstances; or why not reverse the order, putting the modern languages first and Latin second, and the Greek as an elective for those who favor it? But few of our young men choose comparative philology as a vocation, and if the new educational system is once introduced, there will be still fewer of them; why then burden all the others with vocabularies and grammatical rules of languages that are no longer spoken by any one, nor even written except by men representing this special department?"

The majority of those who argue in this manner (their number is on the increase, and they are very emphatic,) do not seem to be overburdened with their respective share of the "old *philological cram*" that they brought with them from school; hence they have no reason to complain over this burden, and if a distinguished scientist recently gave us the advice through an article in the "Rundschau" to abandon finally the mediæval standpoint of the gymnasia teaching the humanities, he probably did not remember in choosing this epithet, that classical philology lay idle through the entire middle ages; that its revival gave a death blow to mediæval training, that it paved the way to the science of our

time, including the natural sciences; that not the adherents to the old, but the reformers and humanists of the sixteenth century cultivated and recommended the same, that the founders of the present state of archeology and philology as taught in our gymnasia and universities, could never be reproached with favoring the views of the middle ages. The system of instruction in our humanistic institutions has nothing in common with them. To be sure, this does not prove that it answers the requirements of our time in every respect.

If the process of training and instructing youth had for its main object to put them in the quickest possible manner in possession of such knowledge as may be required for business and routine life, one might perhaps share the regret over the fact, that so many of our young men spend so much time in learning languages which only a few would put to practical use. But this question presents a wholly different aspect, when the chief mission of our gymnasia is to be found in this, that their pupils are not merely to gain general information, but that their minds should be disciplined to fit them for a higher intellectual scope of work, for scientific treatment of subjects, for vocations in which such a previous training is indispensable. To cover this ground, the instruction in modern languages would have to be imparted according to the same method that has been approved in the pursuit of classics. It would not suffice to enable the scholars to speak and write the foreign language fluently and correctly; but if the cultivating influence of linguistic study is to secure and to maintain its claim, one must give them as deep an insight into the grammatical and lexicographic structure as is done and aimed at in the study

of ancient languages. In so doing, however, one would soon find out, that the time supposed to be saved by substituting the living languages for the ancient, is by no means so great as it is commonly imagined. He who is familiar with the Latin and Greek grammar, will find but little trouble in acquainting himself with the grammar of the Romanic and Germanic languages. Whoever knows German and Latin, will acquire the vocabulary of those languages much more quickly and firmly than others, because most of the roots and stems and their meanings are already known to him. A greater part of the time that is devoted to the ancient languages, therefore, is a help in the study of the modern. Classical philology is the foundation for modern philology, and Latin especially is so indispensable for the scientific treatment of the latter that it seems incomprehensible how professional authorities (*Männer vom Fach*) could for a moment admit that men should be entrusted with the instruction of modern languages, even in schools of higher standing, who are not required to prove their thorough acquaintance with a language from which all the Romanic languages are directly derived, and by which the English has indirectly been greatly influenced.

But the most decisive ground against the proposition, to substitute the study of modern languages for that of the ancient, may be found in the fact that the latter will accomplish greater results for the most thorough education than the former, and it is the only channel that leads us to a living knowledge of a civilization from which our own is directly derived, and by which it will ever be animated (*Erfrischen*). Latin Grammar, by the very nature of its rigor and logical sequence, is as excellent a medium for general discipline to the mind as Roman Law



is for the training in jurisprudence ; and in this respect a modern language cannot be substituted for it any more than the Pandects could be replaced by the code Napoléon. The Greek language unites with the perfect clearness of its logically grammatical structure a richness, a flexibility, a capability to adapt itself to every need of expression in language, a fullness and transparency in composition, a euphony that is only equalled by Greek art with her classicism (*classicität*). All the mental faculties and powers to which creative language lays claim, and which the study of language develops, are uniformly incited by it ; the clearest conception of the world by which we are surrounded, the keenest observation of human life, are reflected in it, and, moreover, it is as abundant in means to give the most accurate designations of thoughts and conceptions as in expressions for æsthetic views, moral qualities and relations, inward movements and conditions of mind. The very circumstance which, in the eyes of our pedagogic utilitarians, constitutes the chief objection to the study of ancient languages, namely, that there is no practical aim in it, — this very circumstance makes it of special value for general culture. The instruction in modern languages, to the extent it is given at school, has for its mission to teach the student how to write and speak the language accurately. To reach this aim will be the main object of both teacher and pupil. In classical training the mere usage is not the aim, but rather a thorough understanding of language, i. e., *word formation, etymology, grammatical and logical analysis*, bearing on a general development of the mind, a broader scope of intellectual training. In the acquisition of a modern language the average student will deem it sufficient to know how to

express his thoughts, whereas in classics he must know WHY he should choose such a word or such a phrase, the shade of distinction and the accuracy of meaning being involved.

We are willing to admit, however, that ancient languages are not studied merely to know them, but in order to interpret and read with accuracy, and by means of such knowledge, their classical authors; and it is only this aim that is intelligible to the conception of the average student; he does not as yet realize the benefit of this process of mind-building and intellectual development, nor would it be advisable to dwell on this subject with him for any length of time; it is better to let him exert his mental powers in the performance of a work, the immediate purpose of which he understands, while the deeper insight into a mental training is as yet beyond his reach. But for his domain the instruction in modern languages will answer the same purpose with this difference, that he is learning how to speak and write them besides, and, viewed in this respect, it might appear as if there were no essential difference between the two. But the modern languages that come in question in the curriculum of our schools are more closely identified with German than with Greek and Latin. Therefore they do not compel the student to render clear through grammatical and logical analysis as in the case of the ancient languages, whatever he is to translate from the foreign language into his own, or *vice versa*; they enable him to a far greater extent to content himself with the mechanical proceeding that consists in mere exchange of individual words with the like in the other language.

For the purpose of laying the foundation of a general

discipline in language and thought, the ancient languages are better adapted, because they require greater departure from common usage, a more definite bearing of the particular instance to the general rules, a greater mental activity. Again, the knowledge of these languages is equally valuable to every one who wishes to acquire a higher academic education, because by it only can we have a clear conception and understanding of classical antiquity. There are those who look down on the limited knowledge in the realm of nature, the imperfect scientific methods, the absurd notions of the ancients, with a certain self-sufficiency, and being conscious of our great progress, they feel convinced that it is not worth the while to burden ourselves for years with the explanation of writings from which we can indeed learn nothing more; yet the two facts can never be done away with that the spiritual life of the ancients has laid the foundation of our own, and that it contains elements of civilization whose worth is so great that to neglect or ignore them would cause a fatal reaction upon our entire civilization.

To understand in its true light the science and culture of the present day, to value justly their missions and doings, one must be able to trace them to their origin; and though this need may not become manifest in all spheres, yet none can wholly avoid its recognition. Science has taken its terminology mostly from the Greeks, or at least, has formed it from Greek roots; and it is exceedingly difficult, besides causing great loss of valuable time, to interpret it to those who are not familiar with the language from which it is derived. But even our scientific conceptions, our ethical and æsthetic views, our ideas of art, are so closely related to those of

classical antiquity, that many of them must remain incomprehensible to him, who has no knowledge of the former. But it is more important still, that at least those of our nation whom a higher academic education is to enable to assume the leadership (and this is the mission of our Gymnasia and universities) should penetrate deep enough into the spirit of classical antiquity, to make use of its inexhaustible treasures in our national life, which the artists, poets, orators, historians and philosophers of Greece and Rome have bequeathed to us, in order to study by their own efforts and conception, and not merely through a second or third medium, the spiritual life of a nation, whose culture is so unexcelled and unique, as that of the Hellenists, a people who, with the soundest realism united the gift to spiritualize everything in the world and to animate it with the breath of beauty. It is needless to prove anew after what has been said before that such a course is impossible, when one does not know the language of such a nation.

Exceptionally great minds may sometimes penetrate with surprising ease, by means of translations, or with a comparatively limited knowledge, into the spirit whence it emanated, when there is affinity with their own; but it does not follow, that they would not have succeeded still better, had they possessed a more thorough knowledge of the original, and still less, that these few exceptions should enable us to regard this fact as applying to all. For example, Schiller was not a great Greek scholar, and yet he was thoroughly imbued with the Hellenic spirit. But he deeply lamented that fact in his earlier education, and if, on one hand, he wrote "the Gods of Greece," and "the Bride of Messina," without knowing much Greek, he also described

in his "Diver" the wonders of the sea, and in his "Tell," the mountains of Switzerland in the most vivid manner, without ever having seen either ocean or Alps. It does not follow from this instance, that it is useless to view the world with our own eyes, nor that a knowledge of the Greek language is unnecessary for him who wishes to obtain a classical education.

Though there are many who after leaving school or college abandon the reading of Greek and Latin authors, we find not only among the philologists, who of course follow it up, the historians and the theologians, but also among the naturalists, mathematicians, jurists and physicians many men who have kept up a lasting interest in ancient literature, and who take up their Tacitus and Horace, their Homer and Sophocles, their Herodotus, Thucydides and Demosthenes, perhaps also their Plato or Aristotle, in the original. And also those who do not follow this course, will, provided they pursued their studies in the Gymnasia with zeal and fidelity, be enabled to understand and to enjoy the old authors even in translations, and the more recent works that are founded upon them or that treat on classic ages, and also the monuments of ancient art, much more thoroughly than they could without that preparation. But the Gymnasia are not intended to teach young people such things as may serve commonly for a livelihood. If that were their only purpose they would have to be divided up into many preparatory courses for specialties. Algebra and Stereometry likewise are not carried on by many after they leave school, but for all that, it is not considered useless to have them taught in the course. The same relation holds good with all the branches taught in the Gymnasia

without exception. The higher the course, the more it will include studies for which the average scholar may have no special occasion later on in life ; in other words, what most of them abandon and in time forget in their details. Modern languages are no exception to this.

The preacher in the country needs the dead languages, in which the Scriptures are written, for his vocation much more than the living foreign languages, which nobody understands in his congregation. Even in smaller cities, unless they are located in a border province, the government employé, the lawyer, the minister and the physician, as a rule, will get along without them. But should they on that account be left out of the course? It would have to be done if the Gymnasia had for a mission to teach only what all the scholars needed in their vocations for a later period in life ; but theirs is a higher, a nobler aim. They are to lead to that general education which is considered the basis for all scientific and professional pursuits ; and it is the very uniformity of this preparatory training for all the various branches into which our knowledge of to-day is divided, that gives the best security for the intellectual life (*geistigen Lebens*) of our nation ; it is so indispensable to success in our university life that only the most superficial mind could cherish the idea that university lectures could be so arranged as to answer the requirements of young people whose preparatory course of instruction was designed for different purposes and was organized to supply the needs of various divergent causes. One might, for instance, treat the natural sciences in such a manner that *both* Greek scholars and those who have no knowledge of terminology could be benefited alike ; on the same principle



they say that lectures might be held on the history of ancient philosophy or on the effect of Greek art and literature on modern art, that could be understood by those who do not know a word of Greek, have never read a Greek poet or prose writer, have heard but little if anything about Greek history, mythology, etc., as those whose minds have been disciplined for years in those things.

But this very *mental training* of youth has been often misconceived and misinterpreted as mere *learning*. They did not understand, did not realize, that in this training the question is not to acquire a certain amount of knowledge and ability in any one direction for life, but that their mission is to drill and develop the mental powers in general, to awaken the mind and to secure a clear conception of all that renders man's life valuable; that for them it is of much greater importance HOW to learn than WHAT to learn. We admit that the latter has likewise its claim, but the measure by which the worth of learning is to be judged is not the mechanical one of usefulness for certain purposes, but rather the one that commands the greatest influence over the formation of mind and character. In our universities and academic institutions youth are not to consider those things of greatest importance that are of most frequent occurrence in vocations of daily routine life, but those that have in themselves the highest worth, those which grant the best nourishment of mind and heart. If measured from that standpoint a knowledge of classics and their foundation as now taught in early youth will maintain its high position in the future as in the past, and thus will ever remain a blessing for the spiritual life of our nation.

E. ZELLER.



[It is superfluous to remark that the authors of the following articles are scholars of the highest rank, not subject to prejudice, not worshippers of any "Fetish," in religion or education. When such men speak on the Greek Question, their verdict is as nearly final as a verdict on such a subject can be. Special attention may well be given to the remarks of each of these writers, on the inadequacy and misdirection of so much of our classical instruction.]

---

[From the *Princeton Review*, March, 1884.]

## THE STUDY OF GREEK.

---

The ends of education are discipline and knowledge. Of these, discipline, if the word be taken in a broad sense, is to be ranked first. Power is worth more than acquisition. The capacity to reason well is a higher possession than an acquaintance with the recorded reasonings of others. To be eloquent, to be able to persuade and move men, is to be preferred to familiarity with orations and addresses. To discern beauty in art, to detect deformity, — much more, the ability to paint well or to sing well, or to excel in the actual work of an artist in any department, — is something more precious than a learned acquaintance with what artists have done. In general, it is the increase of mental force, the refinement of sensibility and of perception, the facility in use of the faculties, whether strictly rational or æsthetic, which constitutes the main end and aim of culture. When this result is not attained, the best fruit of educa-

tion is missed. Where life, and force, and the creative impulse are absent, learning sinks into pedantry. There are such degenerate periods when originality dies out. Such, for instance, was the age of the Byzantine writers in the decline of the Greek Empire. Knowledge performs its best office when it spurs to independent activity and furnishes materials for advancement in discovery and invention. We may find an illustration in the military art. In the wars of the French Revolution, the Germans at first followed in general the tactics and strategy of the Great Frederick. He was a soldier of genius. Against Napoleon, a greater genius still, they were beaten in every encounter. At length they learned Napoleon's ways, and combined Europe overcame him.

The objection to the study of Greek and Latin that they are "*dead* languages," hardly merits attention. This phrase, which seeks to attach the gloom and uselessness of things that are dead to classical studies, is a part of the clap-trap of the adversaries of learning. It is an old and stale method of decrying these studies. If no language could be worth studying which one did not wish to speak, or which is not spoken to-day, the objection would have weight. But as there are living tongues — for example, the dialects of Patagonia and Central Africa — which it is not advisable to bring into the college curriculum, so it is possible that there are nobler types of speech which belonged to nobler races now no more, that it is expedient to study for what they are and for what they help us to learn.

The objects of study, the object-matter, are the world and man. The "world" is here the synonym of nature. It embraces the physical universe, including the earth, its productions, and its inhabitants other than men.

This is the realm of the natural and physical sciences. The grand progress of these studies is the most striking feature of the times, as regards the advance of knowledge. No one can be called an educated man at this day who is ignorant of the departments of inquiry which deal with nature. They provide when earnestly pursued a discipline of their own. But they can never supersede as a means of culture the study of MAN. This is the "proper study of mankind," the supreme object of curiosity, and source of mental and moral development. In this statement, religion is not forgotten; but it is through the contemplation of man primarily and of nature, that we learn of God. Man — what he is, what he has thought and done, the civilization which he has created — this is that object of study, to which belongs a transcendent worth. In this study, embracing history, philosophy, politics, literature, religion, are the fountains from which cultivation is to be derived. To an individual cultivated thus, the sciences of nature gain a new quality, an ideal element, a suggestiveness, of which, independently of this advantage, they are destitute.

Now at the foundation of a thorough and comprehensive survey of nature there lies one branch of knowledge. At the foundation of the thorough and comprehensive study of man there lies another. Each of these two fundamental studies is essential to the full understanding of things that now are — of nature as it is spread out before us, and of humanity in its present advanced condition. In other words, the present scene, in order to be radically comprehended, must be looked at in the light of these two fundamental studies.

Mathematics, which deals with the relations of number and space, is at the basis of the physical and even

of the natural sciences. Physics and astronomy rest upon it. It is the key to the understanding of the astronomical system. Its formulas are the scheme of the creation. There is so much of truth in the speculation of Pythagoras, who made number the life and essence of the universe. The combinations which chemistry has to explore, even the disposition of the leaves on the bough of a tree and of the blossoms on a stalk, are, we are told, conformed to mathematical formulas. Mathematics, then, in relation to nature, which is one of the two grand objects of study, is the fundamental science. It necessarily holds a throne of honor in a system of liberal education.

We are now looking predominantly at the objects of study. It is well, however, to consider at the same time its disciplinary value and effect. There are not wanting those who think lightly of the influence of the mathematics on the intellect. It is frequently said that, instead of qualifying one to reason, mathematical science not only furnishes no help in this direction, as regards probable reasoning, with what we are chiefly concerned in practical life, but that it positively weakens the capacity to judge correctly in cases where demonstration is out of the question. It leads one to demand a sort and degree of proof which the nature of the case does not admit of. Hence it may engender an unreasonable and hurtful scepticism. These considerations have been insisted on by many writers, among whom are Sir William Hamilton and Macaulay. Nor are they without force. But mathematical study does cultivate the attention and the power of definition. It is a discipline of the attention. A bright-minded boy, with his classical author and his dictionary open before him,

may look out a word, and then look out of the window ; he may intermit his attention ; he may carry forward an undercurrent of thought on heterogeneous topics ; and yet his progress in making his translation, sorely hindered though it may be, is not utterly suspended. But such a boy cannot advance an inch in Euclid without an absolute concentration of his mind upon the process of ratiocination with which he is concerned. Now to gain the habit of attention is half the battle in education. He who has learned to keep his mind fastened on the work before him has advanced a long step in mental training. So in mathematical studies accuracy of definition is indispensable. The proposition must be exactly stated, and so must each of the premises and of the inferences. Loose statement goes for nothing. This precision in thought and expression, it need not be said, is an invaluable attainment.

Analogous to the relation of the mathematics to the sciences of nature is the relation of the Græco-Roman history and civilization to our modern society. The ruling nations on the borders of the Mediterranean, the Greeks, the Romans, and the Hebrews stand in this seminal relation, if one may so say, to modern civilization. The legacy which they left is incorporated into the existing institutions and culture of the European nations and of their offshoots. The roots of the present are to be sought in the past — in that “monarchy of the Mediterranean” which included under its sway the Greek with his science and letters, the Hebrew with his religious faith, and which centered in the Romans, with their genius for rule, their civil law and polity. This genetic connection of the existing civilization with the literature, philosophy, ethics, jurisprudence of antiquity

belongs to the providential order. It is the course which the world's history has taken. As God has made nature mathematically, so He has governed the life and development of mankind as here indicated. We are on the bosom of a broad river, which is to be traced back to its fountains in Hellas and Rome. New nations have come upon the stage, though of the same Aryan family. New factors have mingled in the historic development. Christianity has supplanted the "gods many and the lords many" of the ancient peoples. Still the traces of antiquity are everywhere discernible.

Thus it is impossible to study humanity in the course of its development to that degree of advancement which the European nations have reached, and it is impossible to understand profoundly the present scene in which we are acting our part, unless we go back to antiquity and acquaint ourselves well with the peoples that have exerted this deep, potent, abiding influence in moulding the character and shaping the destiny of the nations coming after them. The geologist might as well aspire to understand the earth by merely inspecting what lies on its surface as the student to understand the present without exploring the past, and, in particular, without an intimate acquaintance with the literature, the polity, and the composite life of Greece and Rome.

How shall this knowledge of Antiquity be obtained? It can be obtained, after a fashion, at second-hand. But for a "liberal" education, for that direct and penetrating view of ancient society which alone satisfies the ideal of such a culture, the languages of Greece and Rome must be learned. In the study of them the youth is put into immediate intercourse with the mind of the ancients. The veil is lifted. Such is the vital relation



of speech to thought that the peculiar genius of a people expresses itself to the discerning student in their language. Moreover, say what one will of the value of translations, the literary works of antiquity can never be fully comprehended and appreciated through them. If this were possible to a genius like Goethe, — and it is not possible to such as he, — this would not prove that it is equally possible to ordinary men. Then as instruments for the investigation of the monuments of the mind and work of antiquity — not to speak of historical study in general — the ancient languages, Greek as well as Latin, are of the utmost consequence. The necessity for the study of these tongues we found, then, mainly on their importance as a part and a means of the study of antiquity — a study indispensable in a liberal course of training.

This general consideration may be followed by a more special remark on the literary value of the products of the Greek mind. These are of unmatched excellence. One writer, Shakespeare, excels all others in a certain exuberance of genius, an abounding wealth of invention; and he has the advantage of being pervaded by the Christian element. On the whole, however, when we take into view both matter and form, the finest productions in literature are the dramas of Sophocles. Homer and Sophocles! Where shall we look for another two upon a level with them? There are no philosophical writers equal to Plato and Aristotle. No orations have ever surpassed those of Demosthenes. No historian has ever outstripped Thucydides. The verdict of ages which affirms the transcendent merit of the Greek authors is not a groundless tradition. It is not the result of a prejudice inspired by a peculiar



training. It is a verdict not to be set aside by the preference of an individual. It has a catholic character; it is the united judgment of men of taste and culture through a long course of generations. Can the student of literature who aims at a truly liberal culture in this department alone, afford to pass by the masterpieces of Greek genius, or know them only through the medium of modern versions, the best of which must fail to reproduce the color and flavor of the original?

The adversaries of the position here taken are prone to say that the Greeks themselves had no Greeks before them; they were the authors of their own literature and culture; why should we not exercise a like self-reliance? The answer must be an exhortation to modesty. We are not Greeks. The simple fact is that the Greeks were a pre-eminently gifted people. They stand at the head of that section of mankind which exhibits a power "to light their own fire." They learned much from older nations. But they were original and creative beyond all precedent and beyond all example in subsequent ages. Plato did not claim too much for his countrymen when he contrasted them with other nations, like the Phœnicians, through their intellectual life and proficiency in knowledge. It is no disgrace to a nineteenth-century American to go to school to the Greeks. They are still, in their own lines, the leaders of mankind. They are the masters. The objection to which we here refer is of a piece with the logic of one who should infer from certain instances of self-taught individuals who have climbed to the pinnacles of science that it would be well to abolish schools and colleges. It is an example of the fallacy of making a rule out of the exception. Dr. Franklin ran away from home and stood before

kings; therefore, whoever would stand before kings should run away from home. Attica was about as large as Rhode Island. Rhode Island is a noble little commonwealth. Yet it has enjoyed political liberty longer than the democracy of Athens lasted, and in the midst of the blazing light of this much-lauded century. What now is, or will be the influence of Rhode Island on the world's history compared with the unmeasured and imperishable influence of Athens? Whence the difference? When men plume themselves on their ability to do for themselves what the Greeks did in their day, the question to be settled is whether they manifest a just self-confidence or self-ignorance and conceit.

In connection with what has been said above, there is an important thought which there is only room here to indicate. There is an expansive effect of the study of the ancients, which is well likened to the influence of foreign travel. We take a journey, not in space but backward in time. We *live* for a while in the distant past. The want of this wide, genial, but subtle cosmopolitan spirit is felt in the case of not a few able men who have never been students of Antiquity — “self-taught” men, perhaps. In their mental view we miss an “atmosphere.” It is a picture without a background. Their intellectual horizon is too near. There is no underlying sense that there were brave men before Agamemnon.

Viewed on the side of discipline the study of Greek is a study of language and a gymnastic in the art of interpretation. In both of these respects it is of unequalled efficacy. Its whole structure, its precision and flexibility, its capacity for expressing the most delicate shades of thought, its harmony, make it without a rival as affording an insight into the nature and possibilities of

human speech. The same qualities raise it to the same rank as a means for the training of the interpretative faculty. Apart from all reasoning, experience shows that equal effects are not capable of being produced by the study of the modern languages. As to the oral use of these tongues, it is common to find in Europe those who speak them glibly, but have not the least claim to be thought educated. The knowledge possessed by couriers and ciceroni has its uses, but it is not culture. It is found that those who are taught in the *Real schulen* of Germany are not even, as a rule, so competent to pursue the studies of natural and physical science as are those who have passed through the classical curriculum. It may be said that if the modern languages were taught as elaborately as the Greek is taught, the result might be different. In the first place, this is a thesis for which there is no proof. In the second place, if the modern languages were taught after a more exhaustive method, if philological analysis and researches into the genesis of words and grammatical forms were introduced, an outcry would be raised against this mode of study as an unwarrantable and unpractical consumption of time. The disciplinary value of Greek has been established beyond all dispute, by its perceived results. Nor is it impossible to point out the *rationale* according to which this benefit follows.

If Greek were given up as a required study in the liberal course, the danger is that it would go where Hebrew is gone. It would come to be studied by ministers almost exclusively. The result of such a change to the tone of culture would be most disastrous.

At this point we are brought to the grand objection against the requirement of Greek among the studies

preparatory to college. It is the objection frequently urged against classical studies generally. As a matter of fact, it is alleged, these languages are not learned. At the end of a period of study, varying from five to ten years, the average pupil cannot read the Greek and Latin authors with any facility. Unable to read them, he lays them aside forever. Not unfrequently, he sells the books which he has laboriously conned. As for any keen relish or genial appreciation of the ancient authors, it is very seldom gained. And so far as they are a means of giving an insight into the Greek (or Roman) genius and life, and thus of bringing a large and profound understanding of history and of modern civilization, their influence on college students is not very potent. How can it be thought wise, when there is so much to be learned, to spend a large portion of the precious years of youth in poring over Greek textbooks? Is not a good knowledge of French and German worth more, in this stirring age, than a smattering of Greek?

This objection cannot be confuted by a sneer. It is, to say the least, plausible. It amounts in our judgment, however, to nothing more than a deserved rebuke to methods of teaching which have come into vogue, and to a loud call for reform. Far less is done than might be done in the years given to classical study. The philological motive has unduly predominated, at the expense of what may be termed the literary and historical, in the modes of instruction. Discipline, valuable as it is, has been turned into a fetish. Classical teachers have come to be satisfied with the gymnastic benefit gained by the student in these long years. They have said practically, and sometimes have avowed, that it is

of little consequence whether the pupil acquires the power to read the ancient writers or not.

Let not the philological discipline be undervalued. The mature man profits by the muscular plays which made so great a part of his business in the years of childhood. Constantly, though insensibly for the most part, he was gaining vigor, and laying up a store of health. The careful study of a few Greek writers, the weighing of the value of the particles, the precise discrimination of the shades of meaning, the constant exertion in determining the sense of words in the light of the context, leaves a lasting effect on the intellect, even though the Greek alphabet itself, in the course of years, should be forgotten.

But this effect is far from being all that may be fairly demanded, considering the time and labor expended by the young in these studies. There has been a great progress in Greek and Latin scholarship within the last forty years. Competent teachers are far more accurate in their instruction than was the case formerly. Grammatical researches have been pushed much further. Comparative philology, and especially the opening of the Sanscrit, have thrown light on all the Aryan tongues, and the Greek and Latin among them.

It is clear, however, that there has not been a corresponding advance in the interest taken by young students in the classics, or in the appreciation of their contents. Virgil and Horace and Homer were read often with more relish in old times, and better retained, in memory, than now. With all the accuracy of knowledge and of teaching, compared with the more slovenly scholarship of a previous day, few attain to any considerable facility in reading the ancient authors. They

are laid aside, as was remarked above, without a pang. The reasons are not far to seek. Many teachers proceed on the assumption that their pupils are all to be philologists. Their drill is fashioned with a view to make them adepts in this line. They cram boys with the minutæ of grammar, instead of letting them learn the essentials, and allowing them to widen their grammatical knowledge gradually in connection with the reading of authors, and their advance to higher stages in culture. Novices are harassed, burdened, wearied, and, in many instances, permanently disgusted by a daily bath in the endless details of grammar. They must dissect the verb, find out the reasons and laws of word-changes, etc., and work their way through a mass of matter of this sort, of which Plato and Demosthenes knew little or nothing. Instead of setting the pupil, after giving him the essential concrete facts, and even while doing so, to make sentences and to read easy lessons, which contain something in the thought or story to interest his mind and reward him for his labor, the effort would frequently seem to be to make his path as hard and loathsome as it can be made. All this cumbrous pedantry is dignified with the name of thoroughness. One consequence is that by many bright-minded boys the study of Greek and Latin is pursued not a day longer than they are driven to it. In many, literary aspiration is chilled. Why should instruction be made a soulless treadmill? Why should there not be elementary reading-books, as formerly, which should entice the pupil "to get out" the translation partly for the pleasure which an amusing anecdote or an interesting passage in ancient history affords? The consequences of this grammatical fanaticism, this mania of pedagogues



are deplorable indeed. Under the method which has extensively prevailed of late, the pupil does not read enough to get any considerable stock of words. He can put on his accents and analyze his paradigms, but he has so slender a vocabulary that he cannot read his authors. This, in brief, is the execrable Dryasdust method which has done more to bring classical studies into disrepute than all the declamation of their avowed enemies. If such a method were adopted in teaching the modern languages, the results would be similar; and no talk about "discipline" would avail to save such a method from general condemnation, if not contempt. "Gerund-grinder" is a not inapt designation for the practitioners of this sort of teaching. They should take for their patron saint the old German who lamented on his death-bed that he had not concentrated his attention on the dative case. They should lay to heart Matthew Arnold's witty saying that "the aorist was made for man and not man for the aorist."

Not only must the purely philological motive and interest be reduced to its proper place; there is likewise an imperative need that the study of Greek and Latin should be, from the beginning, the open door to the study of Antiquity. When Arnold of Rugby carried his classes through Thucydides he made the study of the author at the same time a study of the author's times, of the art of war as then practised, of civil polity, diplomacy, statesmanship, etc. There is no reason why, in close connection with the study of the Greek and Latin writers, students should not be initiated into the investigation of ancient religion, of ancient art, of the growth and characteristics of the communities whose languages they are learning. In a word, ancient history, in its



comprehensive meaning, should be made an inseparable part and concomitant of classical study. It is practicable, with a right method and with inspiring teachers thus to give young men as early as about the close of the Sophomore year in college, such a knowledge of ancient history that they shall be well equipped for engaging in the study of modern history, and in the branches of knowledge usually pursued in conjunction with it. It is not requisite for the purposes of discipline that the linguistic interest should be all in all. The literary, the æsthetic, the historical motive may have its rightful prominence, and the discipline to be drawn from exactness of philology will come of itself. There are welcome indications of a reaction against the theory and practice which have done so much to provoke hostility to Greek and Latin. There are the beginnings of a reform. Attacks on classical study will not be without use if they stimulate those who value it aright, to adopt a more rational and fruitful method.

The propositions which the foregoing remarks are intended to sustain are these :

1. While the study of Greek (as well as of Latin) is relatively less important now than at a former day, it is still essential to a complete, a "liberal" culture.
2. The ground of this necessity does not lie any more in the intellectual discipline gained in linguistic study, than in the whole genetic relation of Antiquity to modern civilization.
3. The study of Greek (as of Latin) should therefore be a part and means of the study of the literature and the institutions of the ancient nations.
4. There is need of a reform in the spirit and method of teaching which shall adapt it to these motives and

ends ; grammatical drill must be subordinated to the attainment of the language as a key to the contents of the literature, and to a knowledge of the collective life of Antiquity.

GEORGE P. FISHER.

[From the *Atlantic Monthly*, January, 1884.]

## THE STUDY OF GREEK.

---

There are reasons why the earliest philosophy and literature of the civilized world should have not only a transcendent interest, but a unique teaching power. Our abstract terms are concrete; our simple ideas are complex. In the realm of mind the course of things in physical science has been reversed. The ancients had four elements; we have fourscore, or more. But it often takes many of their elementary thoughts to make one of ours. Thus the study of the old philosophers leads us into a more minute analysis of the rudiments of ontology, and of deontology, too, than is dreamed of by their successors in these latter centuries. In poetry, equally, our comprehensive knowledge and our easy command of nature place us at a disadvantage. There is no scope for the imagination in fields of space thoroughly measured, familiarly known, and traversed with more than the speed of the wind. The master of a paltry coasting vessel who should encounter any serious peril, or bring home accounts of any wonderful adventure or strange sight, on a voyage like that described in the *Odyssey*, would be remanded to the fore-castle. Yet there still exist on that route as rich materials for the plastic imagination as Homer found there: but we must go back to Homer to find them. It is, moreover, well that we should go back; for steam and electro-magnetism

are too fast exorcising the spirits that used to dwell in wave and storm, in fountain, field and forest, and degrading poetry into loose-jointed metaphysics, or sentimental egotism, rhythmically written. We must admit, however, that the best translations will furnish a very large part of the profit and pleasure to be derived from the Greek classics.

Yet not all. There is the untranslatable in every language, and in none more than in the Greek. There are, especially in Homer, in the tragedians, and in Aristophanes, compound words to which we have none that correspond, and which drop much of their meaning in a paraphrase; and there are turns of expression, descriptive traits, metaphors, which are almost despoiled of their pertinence and beauty either by a literal rendering or by a free translation. Take, for instance, the apostrophe of Prometheus to the sea, in the tragedy of Æschylus that bears his name, — *ποντίων κυμάτων ἀνήριθμον γέλασμα*, literally, *innumerable laugh of sea-waves*, which is not graceful English. The Greek implies something seen and something heard, — the manifold glancing of the sunlight from a slightly mottled surface, and the gentle, gleeful murmur of the sluggish waves as they lap the shore. This very phrase adds a new joy to the seaside. There are, too, single words, phrases, verses, which plant themselves ineradicably in the memory, and which are not infrequently recalled even by those whose Greek scholarship is neither deep nor fresh. It is hardly too much to say that the pleasure of reading and of having read the Prometheus Vincetus of Æschylus in the original is worth the time and labor spent in acquiring the capacity to read it.

But it is not our present purpose to discuss the com-

parative worth of æsthetic pleasures; nor are we prepared to deny that, for many minds at least, equal enjoyment with that derived from the ancient classics may flow from the literature of our own or other modern tongues. What is now proposed is to consider the worth of Greek, in its practical aspects, for a liberally educated man, whatever his profession may be.

In the first place, the study of Greek is of immeasurable worth in forming a good English style. Comparative philology is as essential to a knowledge of grammar as comparative anatomy is to a knowledge of the human frame. No man ignorant of other languages understands the powers and capacities of his own. Especially is grammar learned by acquaintance with languages that have a grammar, which the English hardly possesses, and which those modern languages that are the abraded *débris* of the Latin possess very imperfectly, but which is preëminently the attribute of the Greek. There is not an inflection of a variable Greek word which does not represent a corresponding inflection of thought, and a corresponding expression of the thought in English. Conversance with such a language tends to create precision, copiousness, and flexibility in the choice and use of words. Then, too, the translation of Greek into English teaches the pupil as much English as Greek. In the competitive endeavor to furnish the best rendering of the Greek text, he enriches his English vocabulary, and acquires invaluable experience in its use. It is virtually an exercise in English composition, with this difference in its favor: that the young writer of themes is confined within his own narrow range of thoughts and the words that represent them, while in translating Greek he is obliged to seek and ambitious to find ade-

quate expression for what is picturesque, graphic, grand and beautiful, far beyond anything of his own that he will write for years to come, if ever, yet enabling him, whenever he has anything to say, to clothe it in such drapery as shall render it presentable.

This is not a matter of mere theory. It is perfectly easy to detect the absence of classical training in a writer. There are undoubtedly exceptions, but so few as not to disprove the rule. In many years' experience as an editor we never failed to detect a difference in favor of contributors who had received a classical education; and in some cases, and with reference to writers of superior ability and reputation, we discovered the deficiency in that regard from internal evidence before we otherwise obtained knowledge of the fact. Nor was it unusual for such a writer to impose upon the editor hardly less labor in bringing a valuable paper before the public than had been employed in its first composition; thus rendering it certain that, when he published anything on his own account, he was largely indebted to a competent reviser or proof-reader. The men to whom we refer were all well educated, doubtless familiar with one or two modern languages, and it may be supposed with the amount of Latin that used to be taught in the upper classes of our academies and high schools. One of them was the president of one of our oldest and best endowed colleges, after an eminent career at the bar and on the bench of his native State; and he not only in his letters expressed deep regret that he had learned, in his boyhood, little Latin and no Greek, but showed in papers, otherwise of great merit, a sad lack of proper linguistic training.

It would be well worth our while to see how a man of

this sort would conduct the war against Greek. Its assailants, so far as we know, have had and have manifested the benefit of classical training in a style with the genuine stamp and ring ; and one of the ablest and most graceful of them, among the recreations of his old age, found special delight and won no little reputation by the version of certain well-known nursery melodies into Greek verse, in metres with which the most fastidious scholar could find no fault.

It may, indeed, be said that every man does not need to be a good writer. True. But it is equally true that no well-educated man ought to be incapable of being a good writer. There are few men of culture who do not perform more or less pen-work, whether in private correspondence or in reports or addresses to a smaller or larger public ; and hardly less than good manners, the free and graceful use of the pen on ordinary occasions is essential to the ornament and dignity of social life. It is especially desirable that our scientific men should keep themselves on the same plane with their brethren in other lands. We crave for them the ease, suppleness and elegance of diction so eminently characteristic of the great English scientists of our day, who may have obtained ascendancy among their peers chiefly by demonstration and argument, but who in large part have owed their power in moulding general opinion and belief to their skill in handling that most subtle and delicate of organs, our vernacular English. At least, let our scientific professors and writers learn a lesson from Æsop's curtailed fox, and keep out of the trap till they can make the amputation of classical culture, which some of them commend, acceptable to all their kind.

To pass to another consideration, we look to our lib-



erally educated men for the guardianship and oversight of our educational institutions. Even the most sanguine of the anti-Greek host do not anticipate the speedy advent of the time when Greek will not form an important, and in some quarters a favored, portion of the high-school curriculum. Some years ago the chairman of the committee on modern languages, appointed by the visiting board of one of our colleges, when asked which of four recitation-rooms, devoted to as many tongues, he would first honor by his presence, frankly replied, "It makes no manner of difference to me; I know not a word of either of those languages." We should be sorry to see the time when a graduate of that same college may be constrained to make a like impartial visitation of a classical school or academy under his charge.

Careful, discriminating cognizance of every kind of school-work by competent trustees or supervisors was never so necessary as now, when a large part of that work is in the hands of novices, who take the office of teacher on their way from college to some permanent profession. The utter incapacity to follow a class in a simple lesson in the Greek Reader would be taken by the class for much more than it means, and the incompetent classical scholar would suffer far more than he deserved as regards respect for and confidence in his general intelligence and scholarship. One would hardly covet the position of the college president already mentioned, who must either have kept clear of the Greek department, or felt an oppressive awkwardness in visiting it. It would be unfortunate were one of our colleges to establish an alternative curriculum, which should at some future time render its most honored graduates unfit

to preside creditably in its councils. This argument seems to us of no little weight; yet it would lose its force were the study of Greek to lapse into general disrepute and neglect. Let us pass to some reasons why it cannot so decline, but, even in case of temporary discredit, must be restored to a permanent place among the essential departments of liberal culture.

The Greek is in many respects the most important factor of the English language. Of the words used and understood by persons of narrow intelligence and little reading, while there are many derived from the Greek, the greater part are of other origin. Of the additional words used and understood by educated persons, by reading and thinking persons, and by those conversant with the arts and sciences, more, probably, are derived from the Greek than from all other languages beside. The same is true of words that have been formed and have come into use within the last half century, and of those which are at this moment pressing their way into current use. Of the sources of English diction, some are drained and dry, others are intermittent; the Greek alone maintains a constant and copious flow. It furnishes the names of all the sciences, and of many of the arts; of many geometrical figures; of almost every mathematical, astronomical, and physical instrument; of many of the old and of almost all the new surgical instruments; and of most of the various instruments, apparatus, and methods employed in the practical applications of science. Chemistry derives from it the larger and more important part of its nomenclature. In botany it has given names to all the classes and orders of the Linnæan system, and, equally, to the series, classes, sub-classes, and divisions thereof, in the system that has

superseded it. There is no department of life, no line of business, hardly an invoice of goods, never a column of advertisements in a newspaper, that is not bristling with Greek words: The man who makes an invention, precious or worthless, deserving a high-sounding name or craving one to catch the popular ear, resorts nowhere but to the Greek for the term that he needs. In a late edition — we dare not say the last — of Webster's quarto Dictionary, of words beginning with *ana* there are 159, with *anth* 64, with *chl* 27, with *chr* 90, with *geo* 60, with *ph* 436, with *ps* 86, with *sy* 294. To these should be added about 100 out of 126 words, with these several beginnings, in the Supplement, a few of which are the same words with different meanings, but most of which are different words. We have in these several classes more than thirteen hundred words, not twenty of which are of other than Greek derivation. The list, to be sure, embraces several large clusters of words from a common root, it may be, not larger than some from Latin roots that might be named; but if Greek roots are really more prolific than any others, it only shows their vitality when thus transplanted, and their special adaptation to English soil. There are also several terminations not uncommon in our language which, perhaps with no exceptions, certainly with few, indicate a Greek origin. Such are *atry*, *gen*, *ics*, *metry*, *ogy*, *phy*, *sis*, *tomy*. Many of the words thus ending are, indeed, included in the thirteen hundred; but the greater part of them would be found under other initial letters.

A great many of these words are technical words, the meaning of which it is important, or at least becoming, that scientific men and practical men of liberal culture should know. In saying this, we would place special

emphasis on the word *know*. To know that a certain instrument is designated by a certain word is not to know the meaning of the word; a liberally educated man ought to know why the instrument is called by that name rather than by any other. Now the technical and scientific terms derived from the Greek are, without exception, significant names, descriptive of the properties, objects, or classes of objects which they represent, and so descriptive of them that one previously unacquainted with them would learn what they are from their names alone. Thus a Greek scholar who had never heard of a thermometer, or a microscope, or a phototype, would at once know what they were; while a man ignorant of Greek, though he might know that certain objects were called by these names, could give no reason why the thermometer might not as well be called a phototype. These technical and scientific words — we cannot cite an exception — bear the precise and ordinary signification of the Greek words from which they are derived or compounded. A very limited Greek vocabulary, such as is acquired in the minimum classical course in our colleges, suffices to make these words easily intelligible, and thus to open to the student not only the nomenclature of his own specific science or profession, but the entire range of terms in all the arts and sciences. Moreover, as has been said, the terms within this range are constantly multiplying. Whole sheaves of them have come into being within the memory of the writer of this paper, and he has often seen a brand-new word, which but for the little of Greek he knew would have puzzled him and teased his curiosity, perhaps in vain, but which was its own prompt interpreter. This inrush of Greek will continue so long as classification, invention, and

discovery shall still be progressive and aggressive ; for the Greek furnishes a most ample affluence of words which combine the qualities of intelligibleness, euphony and facility in the graceful formation of compound terms. Apart from any considerations connected with Greek literature, one who has lived in clear light as to so large and important a portion of our own language cannot think with patience of any theory of liberal education which should leave this, else the most luminous region of our English vocabulary, in perpetual eclipse. If our technological schools aim at making their graduates anything more than very narrow specialists, they will find it necessary to introduce Greek into their curriculum. We should be sorry for them to dispense with Latin ; but Greek is by far the more important of the two.

. . . . .

There exist exaggerated notions as to the time required for the study of Greek. It has been repeatedly said and written that it demands the hardest work of four years in a course preparatory for college. This may have been seemingly true of one or two schools a quarter of a century ago ; but in most of our classical schools the entire preparatory course then occupied but three years, and was often completed in two. Indeed, at a still earlier period, when school vacations were merely nominal, when all that a studious boy did was to study, and when plain living did more to keep students in vigorous health than hygienic restrictions and rules do now, it was no uncommon thing for a boy who had more brains than his father had money to fit himself for college in a year. The requirements then included more Greek and Latin than at present, and much less

of mathematics, and very little beside, and a year then was probably equivalent to two years now; for about one-third of the school year is now taken up by vacations and holidays, and our school-boys are encouraged or at least permitted, to have not a few engrossing objects and pursuits aside from their school-life. In most of our good preparatory schools Greek now occupies a portion, by no means the principal portion, of from two to three years; being commenced in many of them in the last quarter (ten weeks) of the third year before entering college. We have before us the course of study in one of our principal schools, in which Greek is studied for three years. The Greek in this course embraces four books of Xenophon's *Anabasis*, one of Herodotus, four of the *Iliad*, portions of the *Cyropædia*, and the Greek Testament, with exercises for the last year and a half in reading at sight Xenophon, Herodotus and Homer, and exercises during nearly the whole time in writing Greek. This is considerably in advance of the requirement for admission in any of our New England colleges; and the time spent in writing Greek might well seem excessive and unreasonable, were not this exercise so arranged and conducted as to supersede in great part the formal study of the grammar, and by enriching the student's vocabulary to save much of his mechanical toil in turning over the leaves of his lexicon.

We have before us a full statement of the time devoted to Greek in a private school, which always sends to college admirably prepared pupils, and which has its clientelage almost wholly among families in which there would be no disposition to shorten the term, or to apply undue stimulants to the diligence, of school



life. Greek in this school is commenced two years and a quarter before entering college. The lessons are from two to four each week. The entire number of lessons does not exceed three hundred. We are assured on the best authority that little more than half that number of lessons would suffice for a boy who made study his vocation, instead of his *a*-vocation, or side-calling, secondary to base-ball, military drill, and miscellaneous amusements.

It must be borne in mind that the lessons in Greek in our good schools are not, as of old, mere recitations, but what they purport to be, hours of direct and positive instruction; superseding a considerable portion of the study formerly required, and facilitating all the rest.

It ought, in this connection, to be emphatically stated that in the method of teaching Greek there has been in all our best schools not so much an essential improvement as an entire revolution, and one which must very soon sweep the old, cumbrous methods out of the way. The grammar is now studied, not in mass, but in great part from words and sentences as they occur in reading. The mode in which one acquires the command of his vernacular tongue is copied in every respect in which it can be made availing. The scholar learns what words are by seeing where they stand and how they are used. For much of the labor of the lexicon the pupil's own sagacity is substituted. The Greek tongue is justly reputed as the most copious of all ancient languages, and yet it is meagre in its roots. It is rich in its wealth and unequalled power of combination. The student used to be suffered to regard every word as a separate entity, to be sought by itself in the lexicon, without reference to any kindred words. He is now taught to analyze a



compound word, and to determine its meaning by its component parts and its context. Thus reading at sight, which would formerly have been considered as a more recondite art than Hindoo jugglery, is now made easy, and a very slender vocabulary, with an active mind, will enable a boy to feel quite at home in a page of the Anabasis, or in one of Lucian's Dialogues, which he had never seen before.

Nor let it be imagined that for a boy who is going to be an engineer, or an architect, or a chemist, the hours spent in learning Greek are, even in the utilitarian view, so much lost time. They will certainly facilitate his acquisition of the more difficult modern languages, especially of the German and its allied tongues. They will save him a great deal of labor in consulting dictionaries for words of Greek parentage. They will preclude embarrassing ignorance and mortifying blunders as to terms which he ought to understand. They will render the writing of English very much less toilsome, and thus will bring him into easier relations with the members of his own profession, and with the public at large.

The importance of the modern European tongues has been urged as a reason for dropping Greek in a scientific or practical education. With regard to these languages, the great mistake has been that in our colleges and classical schools they have been studied too much in the way in which Latin and Greek used to be studied, as if they were not only dead languages, but incapable of being raised to life. Better methods are fast coming into use. French and German are now taught as they might be learned in Paris or Dresden. The pupil acquires the language by using it, rather than as a condition precedent to using it. This improved method is fast making its

way, and will soon become universal. From one of our schools, second to none in its reputation for Greek, the pupils now go to college capable of conversing with a good degree of fluency in either French or German, and many of them in both; and we doubt whether more time is there consumed in Greek, French and German by a boy who takes all three, than used to be occupied under the old method, and to much less advantage, by Greek alone.

There is one argument against Greek, which we have not attempted to meet, because we have not known how to deal with it. It is alleged that the study of Greek is not only a waste of time, but that it cramps the mind, employs it in work unsuited to the development of capacity for scientific labor and for practical usefulness, and is a drawback on one's success in other than literary pursuits. A charge like this admits of specifications, and ought to be brought only by those who can make some show of damage. But when a member in the fourth generation of the most successful family in America ascribes to Greek all the misfortunes and failures of his ancestors and kindred, we might almost suspect him of anti-republican aspirations; for the only misfortune that can be conceived of in the history of that family is their failure to become a race of hereditary monarchs. Then, again, when the man who, confessedly at the head of his department of science in this country, has only his peers among the foremost scientific men in Europe complains of having been weighted down by Greek in his boyhood, we doubt whether any ambitious youth will spurn the weight if with it he can start on a career so very full of honor. Men of this sort are not valid witnesses, and we have no others.

When the men who linger in the outer courts of science, and try in vain to enter, or when those who in business or in political life are perpetually stumbling and faltering, can show us that such smattering of Greek as they have has been the insuperable obstacle in their way, it will be a fit time to inquire how and why.

Fortunately for us, the experiment of dispensing with Greek at the option of candidates for university honors in the mathematical and physical sciences has been tried in Germany, and it has been found that even for these sciences a regular classical course, including Greek, furnishes a better preparation than is attained by the non-classical, but most skillfully devised and ably conducted curriculum of the *Realschulen*. Such is the almost unanimous testimony of the professors in the Prussian universities. We could hardly expect more favorable results in this country, especially when we bear in mind that the Prussian educational system is in every department thoroughly organized, and administered by instructors who have passed a prescribed test; while it would be impossible in our country, except by slow degrees and with numberless exceptions and failures, to establish a uniform and adequate system for the preliminary training of scientific students.

We rest our case here, trusting that we may have added some little weight of truth and reason in behalf of classical education as the best possible discipline for scientific study, and for the arts, pursuits, and employments of liberally educated men.

A. P. PEABODY.



















LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 019 598 408 6